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THE  
BOOK OF JUDGES.

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*TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN, WITH ADDITIONS.*

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AT CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

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# THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

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## INTRODUCTION.

### § 1. *Contents and Plan.*

1. THE Book of Judges is in a special sense the first historical book of Israel. It does not, like the Book of Joshua, relate the deeds of one man, nor does it, like the last four books of Moses, revolve around the commanding figure and lofty wisdom of a prophet. To a certain extent, this book also is a Genesis. The first book of the Pentateuch describes the opening period of the primitive patriarchal family; the Book of Judges relates the earliest history of the people of Israel in Canaan. "The children of Israel asked the Lord," is its opening sentence. It rehearses the fortunes, deeds, and sufferings of the people, as they occurred after the death of Joshua. For this personage was only the testamentary executor of the prophet who remained behind on the other side of the Jordan (cf. on ch. i. 1). When he also died, Israel, the heir, deprived both of the authoritative direction of Moses and the executive guidance of Joshua, entered upon the independent management of its acquired possession. The Book of Joshua is the history of a conqueror; the Book of Judges that of a people for the first time in possession. Hitherto, Israel had always been in a condition of unrest and movement, first enslaved, then wandering in the desert, finally undergoing the hardships of the camp and conquest; the Book of Judges exhibits the nation in the first period of its life as a settled, possessing, and peaceable people. Hitherto, the nation, like a minor, had been authoritatively directed by its guardian and friend; the Book of Judges opens at the moment in which the people itself is to assume the administration of its affairs in accordance with the sacerdotal and civil constitution which has been framed for it. This is indicated, from various points of view, by the name which our Book bears in the Canon: *Shophetim*, Judges. The same title is borne by the Synagogue pericope which begins, at Deut. xvi. 18, with the command, "Thou shalt make thee Judges (*Shophetim*) in all thy gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Since Moses no longer exercised his legislative, nor Joshua his executive functions, these *Shophetim* constituted the highest civil authority (cf. on ch. ii. 16), who in conjunction with the priesthood, were to watch over the observance of the law. The Book of Judges, accordingly, recounts the history of the times, after the death of Joshua, in which the governing authority in Israel was to be exercised by the *Shophetim*.

2. The Biblical books are throughout books of instruction. For this purpose, and this alone, were they written. Their design is to show the relations, first of God, and through God of Israel, to history. In their view, all history, and that of Israel especially, is a continuous fulfillment of the truth and purposes of God. The achievements and the fortunes of all nations are the consequences of their moral relations to God. But the preëminence of Israel consists in this, that the God of nature and of time was first revealed to it, and that in the Law which it received from Him, it has a clear and definite rule by which it can order its relations to God and know the moral grounds of whatever befalls it. Upon the observance of this law, as the evidence and expression of faith in the living God, the freedom, well-being, and peace of Israel repose. This had been made known to the people, before under Joshua's direction they left the desert and addressed themselves to the conquest of Canaan. If after victory, they shall observe the law, and be mindful of their calling to be a holy People of God, prosperity will follow them; if not, they shall fall into bondage, poverty, and discord (Deut. vii. 1 ff.). The Book of Judges is a text-book of fulfillment to this prediction. The twenty-one sections of which it consists are organically put together for this purpose. It may, indeed, be said that there are three principal divisions recognizable: first, chaps. i. and

ii.; secondly, chaps. iii.-xvi.; thirdly, chaps. xvii.-xxi. But the lessons which these three divisions respectively contain, evince precisely the organic connection in which the whole narrative stands with all its parts, as the necessary fulfillment of what was promised in the law. The first two chapters are a pragmatic introduction to the history of the book as a whole. They explain the possibility of the events about to be related. Not in the history of Joshua could the germs of the subsequent conflicts lie; for Joshua stood in the spirit of the law, and moved in the steps of Moses. It was only in what the tribes did after his death, that their foundation was laid. Accordingly, when ch. i. relates the prosecution of the conquest by Israel, its main object in so doing is not to tell what was conquered and how, but rather to show that in violation of the Mosaic command the tribes failed to expel the Canaanites. In consequence of this failure, the forewarnings of the law (Deut. vii.) went into fulfillment. Peace endured only so long as the elders yet lived who remembered all the great works that were done for Israel at their entrance into Canaan (Josh. xxiv. 31). The younger generation soon fell into the snares of temptation, and consequently into spiritual and political servitude. In distress, indeed, they sought after God, and then heroes rose up among them, who were truly their Judges, and who, acting in the spirit of God, regained their liberty. Their deeds are reported in chaps. iii.-xvi. But the root of the evil was not thereby removed. Heathenism continued to exist in the bosom of Israel. The occasion of apostasy afforded by the idolatry of the Canaanites was permanent, but the institution of the judgeship was transient. The service of Baal perpetuated itself from generation to generation; but the strength and energy of the Judge expired with the person in whom they dwelt. So also all those judges whom according to the law Israel was to elect for the administration of its local affairs (Deut. xvi. 18 f.), were invested with merely personal, not hereditary, dignity. The permanent evil was not confronted with any equally permanent institution. To this fact ch. ii. already alludes; for it says, ver. 19, that "when the Judge was dead, they turned back."

3. In consequence of this, the Book of Judges is the book of fulfillment from yet another point of view. It teaches that by reason of the fact just alluded to, the hereditary kingly office had to be set up. In Deuteronomy (xvi. 18 f.), the institution of Judges in all the gates of Israel is immediately followed by this provision (ch. xvii. 14 ff.): "When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me, then shalt thou set him king over thee whom the Lord thy God shall choose." The Book of Judges shows that this result was unavoidable. The government of the Judges, it points out already in ch. ii., has no traditional strength. The authority of the greatest among them ceases when he dies. Each one of the great heroes who are portrayed from ch. iii. onward, affords proof of the want of the hereditary kingly office, albeit in different ways. When Othniel died, no second hero of Judah was forthcoming to restrain Israel from sin. Ehud was a deliverer (ch. iii.), but he is not even called a Judge. After him, the work of delivering and judging devolved on a woman, and Barak was willing to fight only if she went with him (chaps. iv., v.). Gideon became inspired with courage only through great wonders on the part of God (ch. vi.); and however pious and great, he himself occasioned confusion in Israel (ch. viii. 27). Jephthah had no legal descent of any kind. Samson was an incomparable hero; but he fought single-handed, without a people to support him.

The Judges were indeed deliverers; but their authority was not recognized throughout all Israel. The call of Deborah was answered by only two tribes. Gideon's leadership was at first opposed by Ephraim. Jephthah fell into sanguinary discord with the same tribe. Samson was bound to be delivered up to the Philistines by the terror-stricken tribe of Judah itself.

The judgeship did not even maintain itself within the same tribe. Of the six principal heroes, three belonged to the south, — Othniel, Ehud, Samson, — and three to the north, — Barak, Gideon, Jephthah; none to Ephraim, the tribe of Joshua, and two to Manasseh.

The title of the hero was *Shophet*, Judge. But judges there were always. In every tribe, the judge was the local magistrate. The hero who rose up to conquer bore no new title. And his authority was merely the authority of the common Shophet territorially extended by virtue of his mighty deeds. But whatever unity he might have formed during his activity, dissolved itself at his death. The tribes then stood again under their separate Shophetim. Permanent organic connection could be secured only through a king. Without this common

and permanent centre, the interests of the several tribes diverged, and each section became indifferent to whatever occurred in the others. National interest decayed, and with it, of course, national strength. The narratives of chaps. xvii.-xxi. form, it is true, a division by themselves, but a division that stands in organic connection with the whole Book. The events there related do not follow after the last judge of whom ch. xvi. speaks. They belong to much earlier times, and yet the position assigned them is well considered and instructive. They demonstrate by new and striking illustrations the necessity of the kingly office to strengthen Israel, within and without, over against the existing idolatry, which could maintain itself only by reason of the divisions and want of unity between the tribes of Israel. The events of these last five chapters do not seem to have occurred under the tyranny of any hostile king. So much the more strikingly do they set forth the weakness of the form of government which Israel had at that time,—a weakness which, to be sure, had its ultimate ground in the weakness of the people itself. They show the decay both of religion among the people and of the priesthood. The first two of these chapters (xvii. and xviii.) teach us what sins in spiritual matters and what deeds of civil violence were possible in Israel, without causing the whole nation to rise in remonstrance. The last two show the reverse of this, namely, the fanaticism of self-righteousness with which the whole people proceeded against one of the brotherhood of tribes, reducing it even to the verge of extinction. Both kinds of sins were possible only because the hereditary, general, and authoritative kingly office was wanting, which everywhere interposes with the same comprehensiveness of view, because it everywhere governs with the same strength. For that reason the narrator several times adds the remark (ch. xvii. 6, xviii. 1, xix. 1): "There was no king in Israel." It is the last sentence he writes: "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes." But the whole Book points to this conclusion. It is the essence of its special teaching. It is that which makes its title doubly significant. The civil authority of the Shophetim would have sufficed, if Israel had been obedient, and had not retained the Canaanites in its borders. As it was not obedient, it needed extraordinary Shophetim to effect its deliverance. But their sporadic activity could not prevail against a permanent evil. This the concentrated strength of the kingly office alone could overcome; just as, according to the gospel, every evil to which the children of men were subject, has been dissolved by the true kingship of the Son of God.

### § 2. *Time of Composition.*

The doctrinal tendency which we thus perceive in the Book is of great importance; for it undoubtedly furnishes a clew to the time in which it was edited. The idea of explaining the possibility of such events as are related in chaps. xvii.-xxi. by the remark, "There was no king in Israel," could be entertained only at a time when perfect political unity and order were still expected to result from the kingly office. No such explanation could have been appended to the account of Micah in ch. xvii., if the division of Israel, and the institution of Jeroboam's political idolatry, had already taken place. After the reigns of various sinful kings of Judah and Israel had become matters of history, and after the rebellion against David and the sanguinary conflicts between Judah and Israel had taken place, the want of a king could not have been offered in explanation of the civil war between Israel and Benjamin. This could only be done while people yet looked with confidence to the kingly office for certain victory without, and divine peace and order within. On the other hand, the prominence with which the lack of hereditaryness in the judgeship, and the want of any guaranty against apostasy are set forth, is explainable only if done at a time when the judicial office had ceased to inspire confidence. There is but one period in the history of Israel in which both these conditions meet, namely, when the people desired a king from Samuel, and he consecrated Saul, and the victories of the latter afforded peace within and without. The Book might be called a text-book for the people, collected and written to instruct and establish them in the new kingly government.

The desire for a king appears as early as Gideon's time. After that hero's victory, the people come and wish to have him for a king. But Gideon declines, and our author manifestly approves his course. Abimelech's disgraceful kingship is minutely related; but the parable of Jotham sets in a convincing light the wrongfulness of the manner in which the trees, *i. e.* the people, seek to make a king. A king so made can be of no service to Israel. It is written (Deut. xvii. 15): "Thou shalt make *him* king whom the Lord shall choose."

In Samuel's time, also, the people wish a king, but they do not undertake to choose one themselves. They pray Samuel to select one for them; and it is only at God's command that Samuel complies.

Samuel, as chronologically he stands between King Saul and the Judges, so as Prophet and Priest he mediates the transition from the judicial to the kingly office. His *prophetic* exercise of the judicial office first teaches the people how rightly to desire and ask for a king. It is on that account that the Book of Judges closes with the heroic deeds and death of Samson. The age of heroes is past. The age of kings can begin only when a *prophet* enjoys respect as a judge throughout all Israel, which had never been the case before Samuel. Hence, this prophet's history forms the introduction to the history of the kingship, since without his consecration no king could exist. This is why the Septuagint and the Vulgate call the Books of Samuel the First and Second of Kings.

The extreme points of time between which the composition of our Book must have taken place, may easily be indicated. It must have been later than the great victory of Samuel over the Philistines, the reformation of Israel, and the return of the ark of the covenant from exile (cf. on ch. xviii. 30). One consequence of the reformation was that, notwithstanding Samuel's protest at first, the people desired a king; for in this promised office they sought security both against their enemies and against themselves and their own unbelief. Another consequence, probably, was the composition of this manual of penitence and instruction.

On the other hand, our Book must have been written before the reign of David. Jerusalem was still called Jebus, and the Jebusites had not yet been expelled (ch. i. 21, xix. 10). But if 2 Sam. v. 6 ff. is to have any meaning at all, it must refer to the utter destruction of the Jebusites' power by David, a conclusion which the whole history confirms. Moreover if our Book had not been written before the time of David, references to his reign could not be wanting. From Othniel's time, the tribe of Judah, David's tribe, falls into the background. The mention of it in the history of Samson, is far from honorable. The relatively copious treatment of affairs in which *Benjamin* figures, points to the time of King Saul. While the history of Othniel is quite summarily related, that of Ehud is drawn out to the minutest detail. Similarly rich is the flow of tradition in the narrative concerning Gibeah (ch. xix. *seq.*). Saul says of himself that he is "of the smallest of the tribes" (1 Sam. ix. 21). This history of Gibeah explains the cause of Benjamin's smallness, and traces it to the savage war made on him by Israel.

### § 3. *The Sources.*

1. The author did not command materials in equal abundance from all the tribes. A full supply flowed in upon him out of the traditions of the tribes bordering on Ephraim, namely, Benjamin, Manasseh, and Dan. The story of Deborah describes the heroic exploit of Naphthali and Zebulun; but Deborah herself resided between Ramah and Bethel, on Mount Ephraim, near the confines of Benjamin. Of the tribes at the extremities of the land, of Reuben (Gad is included in Gilead), of Simeon (only the incident in ch. i.), of Asher, the author's sources afforded scarcely any information. Concerning Judah's preëminence, only ch. i. (cf. ch. xx. 18) communicates anything. Toward Ephraim (for ch. i. 22 ff. refers to the *whole* house of Joseph), the sources nourish an unfavorable disposition. No hero, properly speaking, came out of Ephraim; for of Abdon nothing but his name and wealth is mentioned (ch. xii. 13). Ephraim originates the sinful opposition to Gideon and Jephthah. In Ephraim Abimelech plays his rôle as royal usurper. There Micah sets up his false religion. Thence also sprang that Levite who was the cause of the civil war. It must not be overlooked that for the author and his times all this was of great significance. When the king demanded of Samuel is appointed, he is not chosen out of Ephraim, but out of Benjamin. The author, who favors the institution of the kingship, brings the moral incapacity which Ephraim as leading tribe has hitherto shown, into prominence. The priesthood, it is true, had their seat at Shiloh. But the whole history of the Judges shows the powerlessness of the priesthood in times of danger. The facts related in the last five chapters of our book, by way of supplement to the deeds of the heroes, are sufficiently indicative of the fall of the priestly tribe. Such things, also, as are told of Levites, occurred only "because there was no king." Ephraim, it is true, gave Samuel to the nation, the restorer of Israel's spiritual strength, and the reformer of the priesthood; but even he could give no guaranty for his children who when in old age he transfers his office to them, do not walk in his steps.



2. As to the authorship of the Book of Judges, the traditions which ascribe it to Samue are ancient; but if in such obscure matters one were to risk a conjecture, he would hardly attach himself to these traditions. The Book apparently presupposes the reign of Saul, just as in the Books of Samuel the reign of David is presupposed. To record the deeds and instructions of God, as brought to view in the history of the nation, was certainly a well-considered and, as the extant sacred writings show, a fearlessly and honestly executed office. If this was the office held by the *mazkir* at the courts of David, Solomon, and the kings in general (cf. 2 Sam. viii. 16, 1 Kings iv. 3, etc.), it would be natural to ascribe our Book to a Benjaminite of the court of Saul. This man had before him narratives, extending over a period of 400 years, which must have been written by contemporaries of the events related. Local and material details such as the histories of Ehud, Gideon, Abimelech, Jephthah, Samson, as also those of Micah and the priest at Gibeah, exhibit, can only proceed from narrators who stood personally near the events. Nevertheless, as has already been remarked, an organic recasting of the materials extends through the whole Book, by means of which the doctrine it is designed to teach is brought prominently to view, and the arrangement of the individual narratives determined. To this it is owing that the record of the great deeds achieved by the Judges closes with Samson, although it is not certain that the death of that hero is the latest event of the Book, and also that the narratives concerning Micah and Gibeah stand at the end, although, as the author himself does not conceal, the events occurred much earlier (cf. ch. xviii. 12, xiii. 25; also, xx. 28). The lesson conveyed in the introduction of the Book, especially in ch. ii. that sin and apostasy are the cause of servitude, and that apostasy in turn is the consequence of the people's disobedience in not expelling the Canaanites, is brought out in similar turns of thought and expression throughout the work (cf. ch. ii. 11, iv. 1, vi. 1, x. 6, xiii. 1; ch. ii. 14, iii. 8, x. 7; ch. ii. 17, viii. 33, x. 13 ff.). The objection that chaps. xvii.-xxi. do not contain such expressions, testifies only to the clearness and order which everywhere pervade the simple narrative. Until the story reaches the age of Samson, these expressions occur because they indicate the moral links in the historical connection. But chaps. xvii.-xxi. are placed outside of this connection. They present occurrences out of times in which the formulæ, "the sons of Israel continued to do evil" (cf. ch. iv. 1, etc.), or, "they did evil" (cf. ch. ii. 11, etc.), were not properly applicable, since they were times of "rest" to the land, in consequence of the victories of one great Judge or another (cf. ch. iii. 11, etc.). Accordingly, these chapters find the ground of the evils they set forth not in the want of a Shophet but of a king. Their unity with the Book as a whole, appears clearly on a comparison of them, as to style and diction, with the introduction, chaps. i.-iii.; as again similar philological characteristics testify to the unity of chaps. i.-iii. with iv.-xvi. (cf. Keil, *Lehrb. der hist. Kritik*, § 47, notes 4 and 5).

3. Notwithstanding this, it is plain that the different narratives of the Book exhibit a difference of coloring among themselves. This could not be otherwise. From the earliest times down to the Middle Ages, it has ever been the manner of the chronicler to tell his story, for the most part, in the very words of his sources. Precisely the Christian historiography of pious men in mediæval times abounds with proofs and instructive illustrations of this fact. To this practice the numerous *hapax legomena* of our Book, found nowhere else, are due (cf. ch. i. 15, iii. 22, iv. 4-19, v. 10, 28, vii. 3, xiv. 9-18, xv. 8, xviii. 7, etc.); while in many places traces of abridgment by the author might be pointed out (cf. ch. iv. 15, xvi. 13 ff., xx.). The communication of invaluable contemporary documents like the Song of Deborah and the Parable of Jotham not only confirms this explanation, but also makes it probable that in other parts of his work too the author made use of popular and heroic songs, although the fact that his prose account of the victory of Deborah and Barak is manifestly independent of the Song of Deborah shows that this conjecture is to be applied with great caution.

The author was acquainted with the contents of the Book of Joshua and of the entire Pentateuch. His first chapter becomes intelligible only when viewed in connection with the Book of Joshua. In the 13th chapter of that Book, the Lord says to Joshua that while he is old much land remains still to be possessed. The territories yet to be conquered are indicated, and orders are given for the division of the whole land among the tribes. With this account ch. i. of our Book connects itself. It shows what conquests remained to be made, from what necessary exertions the people still shrank, and where contracts of toleration were still made with the heathen inhabitants. The enumeration of places, especially in ch. i. 27-36, presupposes familiarity with chaps. xiii.-xix. of Joshua so necessarily, that without it it would

be altogether unintelligible. Only those places are named which were not fully subdued, consequently, the knowledge of what formed the entire territory allotted to each tribe is presupposed. But this knowledge could only be obtained from the above-mentioned chapters in Joshua, since the territorial possessions of the respective tribes had nowhere else been defined.

In fact, the Book of Judges as a whole sets forth the fulfillment of what was contained in the Pentateuch and Joshua: its author must therefore have been acquainted with the contents of both. Chapter ii. is largely made up of sentences found in the last four books of Moses [cf. Hengst. *Pentateuch*, Ryland's ed., ii. 24 f.]. The history of the exodus is evidently known to the author in the very words of the Biblical narrative (cf. ch. ii. 12, vi. 13). The song of Deborah speaks in like manner of the journey through the desert and of Sinai. The narrative of the discord in Shechem (ch. ix. 28), reminds one of the story of Dinah (Gen. xxxiv.); and the deed in Gibeah is related in phraseology similar to that used in the history of Lot (Gen. xix.). We must here glance at a misunderstanding emphatically maintained by Bertheau in several passages of his Commentary. The Book of Judges, he asserts, contains references to matters that occurred under Solomon, and therefore its author must have lived after this king. In support of this, he refers to 1 Kgs. iv. 7-19 compared with Judg. i. 27, 28; but the reference proves nothing. The passage in Kings relates, to be sure, that Solomon appointed twelve officers over all the realm, whose duty it was to provide for the royal household. Of course, the districts mentioned Judg. i. 27 fell under the charge of some one of these officers. But in Judg. i. 28, it is stated that Manasseh did not drive out the Canaanites of these districts, but let them remain on condition of paying tribute, and in that we are to find a reference to Solomon!! As if Solomon had not appointed these officers over the *whole* kingdom! or as if their appointment had any reference to the Canaanites or to "tribute," neither of which are so much as named in connection with it! A measure necessary in every regal government for the existence of the state, we are to identify, forsooth, with a measure of subjugation against enemies in a district! The very passage in 1 Kgs. ix. 15-22, which Bertheau connects with 1 Kgs. iv. 7-19, should have shown him the true nature of the appointment of these officers. For these verses, while they state that Solomon made serfs of the still remaining heathen, expressly add that he did not make servants of any Israelites. But this action of Solomon toward heathen is not the subject of discourse at 1 Kgs. iv. 7-19, where officers are appointed over all Israel; and as little in Judges i. 28, which speaks of the time when Israel *grew strong* (which it certainly had been long before Solomon's day), and imposed tribute<sup>1</sup> upon the Canaanites. This is the very thing for which Manasseh is blamed, that when it grew strong, instead of expelling the heathen inhabitants, it made them tributary, thus sowing the seeds of future sin. The whole passage, if it referred to Solomon, would be senseless. And why, if the author thought of Solomon, did he not name him?

Yet more singular is another conjecture put forth by Studer and Bertheau. Judg. i. 29 states that Ephraim did not drive the Canaanites out of Gezer, but that they continued to dwell there. Now, we read in 1 Kgs. ix. 16 ff., that an Egyptian Pharaoh conquered Gezer, and slew the Canaanites, after which Solomon rebuilt the city. To this conquest, now, we are to suppose the author of Judges alludes in ch. i. 29! But the author manifestly knows only this, that the Canaanite still dwelt in Gezer! Had he alluded to the conquest of Gezer and its rebuilding, he must have told of the destruction of the Canaanite; for at the time of Solomon's rebuilding, the Canaanite was no longer there! Of such grounds as these for bringing down the date at which our book was written, Bertheau has *four* more (p. xxix.): 1. His interpretation of ch. xviii. 30, which he thinks may refer either to the Assyrian or Babylonian conquest, on which see the commentary below. 2. The expression "until this day" (ch. i. 21, 26, vi. 24, x. 4, etc.), implies a long lapse of time between the occurrence and the author. But even fifty years would suffice, and the author had a period of four centuries under review. 3. The author was acquainted with regal government in Israel (ch. xvii. 6, xviii. 1, etc.). Undoubtedly, because he lived under Saul, and therefore also, 4. Shiloh had ceased to be the seat of the priesthood. But how all this can be made to prove the composition of the Book of Judges in the Assyrian period, it is hard to say. Bertheau (after others) speaks of a cycle of twelve judges; but to justify this, either Barak or Abimelech must be omitted. The Jews counted fourteen. The number seven can only be got by force for the Book contains eight extended biographical sketches, to which Othniel is to be added

<sup>1</sup> מַס, the difference between which and מַס לַיָּד, 1 Kgs. ix. 21, is also to be noted.

All such play on numbers, which if the author had intended or found, he would have unquestionably set forth clearly and holdly, can at best neither prove nor disprove anything.

4. But it is precisely the traces by which the author's use of earlier narratives is indicated, that testify to his freedom and originality. They show a natural and living appropriation of sacred history and its teaching, not a slavish and mechanical borrowing. The language of our Book, too, contains expressions not found in the Pentateuch and in Joshua (cf. on ch. ii. 14 and 18, xx. 26, and Keil, *l. c.*). The manner in which earlier history records occurrences analogous to those which our author has to relate, is recalled with freedom, without servile imitation. Compare, *e. g.* the account of the appearance of the angel to Gideon and the kindling of his present, with that of the visit of the angels to Abraham (Gen. xviii.) and the kindling of his sacrifice (Gen. xv. 17); the story of Jephthah's vow with Abraham's offering up of Isaac (Gen. xxii.).

Very significant is the clearly discriminating use of the divine names Jehovah and Elohim, the former of which constantly designates the absolute God who has revealed himself to Israel, while the latter expresses the general conception of Deity, as recognized also by heathenism. The nations of Canaan were not without Elohim on whom to call. But Baal and Ash-taroath were false Elohim. Israel had the true Deity, the only Elohim (הֵאֱלֹהִים): the living Jehovah. This God of Israel the heathen, and with them the apostate Israelites themselves, did indeed consider and speak of as an Elohim; but he was no nature-deity, but the God of Israel's history, Jehovah, the Deliverer from Egypt, the mighty wonder-worker, the Creator of all men. The use of the names Jehovah and Elohim is indicative of the difference between Israel and the nations in their relations to the true God and in their views of the universe. It implies not different documents but different spiritual conditions; and the profound subtilty of the narrative is shown nowhere more strikingly than in the alternation of these names. When the heathen Adonibezek speaks, in ch. i., he uses Elohim. Ehud, when he addresses King Eglon, says Elohim; but when he speaks to Israel, Jehovah (cf. ch. iii. 20, 28). Micah's private chapel is merely called a house of Elohim (ch. xvii. 5), although he himself pretends to serve Jehovah. To sinning Ephraim Gideon speaks only of Elohim, just as this name only occurs in the history of Abimelech. The name used corresponds with the spirit of those by whom or in whose ears it is spoken. In Micah's idolatrous temple, in the Shechem of Abimelech's time, and in Ephraim's pride, the fear of the true God of Israel does not manifest itself.

Occasionally, Jehovah and ha-Elohim (הָאֱלֹהִים), the God, *sc.* of Israel, are used interchangeably; but yet not altogether as equivalents. Even the heathen Midianites may speak of the God of Israel as ha-Elohim (ch. vii. 14), but not as Jehovah. The latter is only put into the mouths of such as worship the Holy One in full faith. Very instructive in this respect is the alternation of the divine names in the accounts of the angelophanies to Gideon and the parents of Samson. The angels appear in human form, but their exalted nature shines through the lowlier appearance. On this account, an angel (ch. xiii. 6), as also a prophet, may be called an *Ish ha-Elohim*, a godlike man; but no one is ever called *Ish Jehovah*, a Jehovah-like man. That description can be applied to neither angel nor man. The divine appearance in the human form under which the angel comes, can only be described by the term Elohim, or, in so far as its source in the God of Israel is to be specially indicated, by ha-Elohim.<sup>1</sup> True, the expression "Angel of Jehovah" may be used as well as "Angel of ha-Elohim;" but still, in ch. vi. 20, 21, these expressions seem to be distinguished from each other in such a way, that the latter designates the angel simply in his appearance (ver. 20), the former as the possessor of supernatural powers (ver. 21). When Gideon once more hesitates, and desires to assure himself whether he be really the chosen deliverer, and therefore longs to have the reality of the angelic appearance already enjoyed confirmed, he addresses himself to ha-Elohim (vers. 36, 39). It may indeed appear strange that in connection with the answer in ver. 40 simply Elohim is used; but the explanation is that the meaning being plain, the article is omitted as unnecessary.

[<sup>1</sup> The author seems to take the genitive in אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים, as a gen. of quality, as in אִישׁ דְּבָרִים, 'an eloquent man.' But this is certainly incorrect. The expression "man of God" does not indicate subjective character or nature, but objective official relations. First applied to Moses (Deut. xxxiii. 1), it was commonly used to designate a prophet. It denotes a man whom God has taken into relations of peculiar intimacy with himself in order through him to instruct and lead his people. The genitive may be defined as the gen. of the principal, from whom the "man" derives his knowledge and power, and for whom he acts. — TR.]

5. These discriminations between the divine names are not to be ascribed to our author in any such sense as if the earlier times which he describes, and the sources which came down to him out of them, had not yet possessed any clear perception of them. All tradition, in whatever form he used it, narrative and song, was pervaded with the same consciousness as that which lives in Biblical books and doctrines, from which indeed it had derived them. The Song of Deborah, the documentary character and genuineness of which are undoubted, celebrates with prophetic power the Jehovah of the generations of Israel. The document which Jephthah sends to the king of Ammon shows a living knowledge of the contents and language of the Books of Moses, although it treats both with great freedom. If Gideon did not live in the consciousness of the authoritative God, who revealed himself in the law, and led Israel through the desert into Canaan, he could not say, while refusing an offered crown, "Jehovah shall rule over you" (ch. viii. 23). When Jephthah makes a vow, he makes it not after the model of any heathen usage, but in the language, form, and spirit of the Israelitish vow, as regulated by Moses. The story of Samson becomes intelligible only by the light of the Nazaritic institute of the Pentateuch (Num. vi.). The priestly body comes to view in the service with Urim (ch. i. 2, xx. 18). Respect for the priesthood shows itself plainly, albeit in a perversion of it, in the conduct of Micah (ch. xvii. 13). The officiating Levite is known by his priestly dress, furnished with the prescribed bells (ch. xviii. 3). It is undoubtedly true that the circumstances of the Levites, as they came to view here and there, as also the story in ch. xix., indicate a wretched condition of the order; but decay implies vigor, just as caricature implies truth. The false ephod points to the true; the idol altar of Gideon's father, to that which his son erects in the place of it. The Book of Judges treats of great international conflicts. But these wars are waged by the nations of Canaan not only against the strange people, but against that people's God. No conflict had ever arisen, but for Israel's *Jehovah*, from whom his people derived their national existence and character, — and, indeed, it was only the *living* Jehovah, who would not suffer himself to be represented by dead images, that could produce this deep and lasting antagonism. Without him, Israel could not have maintained itself in a struggle of four hundred years, to be finally victorious, and to find itself in possession of solid foundations for future civil and religious life.

Of course, the Book of Judges does not aim at giving a history of the general culture of the age, after the manner of modern times. That it says so little of the priestly institutions and the law, proves only that it presupposes them as known. It is certain, at least, that the discourses of the prophetic messengers (chaps. ii. and x.), like the whole Book, explain the several apostasies of the nation out of the decay of their religious and spiritual life.

To infer from the abnormities that come to view, as the idolatry in Ophrah, the sin of Abimelech, the discord between the tribes under Jephthah, the abomination in Gibeah, and the wretched condition of the Levites, that the law, in all the fullness of its instructions, was not yet known or published, would be a singular procedure. As if during the times succeeding Clovis there had been no churches, no bishops, no Christian people, in Gaul, notwithstanding the horrible deeds of the kings and their helpers! Or as if in our own day and land, in which the Christian Church and Christian doctrine are unquestionably prevalent, the presence and existence of these might nevertheless be denied, because of the abominations of apostasy which come to light, as to morals, in police-reports, and as to doctrine in the myriad books of modern idolatry! It is the nature of Biblical historiography to disclose the truth, without regard to men and without flattery. It does not, in modern fashion, glorify in breathless declamations the dutiful deeds of the "faithful"; it mentions them in few words. But it brings the disgrace and punishment of sin into the foreground, in order to warn against transgression and induce repentance. That it has become common, especially since the rationalistic period, to represent the age of the Judges as wild and barbarous, only shows that men are prone to overlook the vices and bloodshed peculiar to their own day. Our Book covers a space of four hundred years. Now, as the periods of servitude are characterized as times of apostasy, while those of independence are represented as times of order, it is not unimportant to observe that apostasy prevailed during but one third of the time described.

§ 4. *Chronology.*

1. The Book of Judges contains also chronological data in connection with the occurrences which it records. It is a suggestive fact, with reference to the peculiarities of his sources, and the manner in which he used them, that the first numerical statement of time given by the author refers to the duration of the oppression of Israel by Chushan Rishathaim, king of Aram. Concerning the occurrences between the death of Joshua and the time of Chushan, related in the introductory chapters, no dates are given, and their duration can only be approximately ascertained. The table of chronological data is conveniently divided into two parts: from Chushan to the domination of Ammon, and from that to the death of Samson.

Israel served Chushan . . . . .	8 years.	
Had rest under Othniel . . . . .	40 "	
Served Moab . . . . .	18 "	
Had rest under Ehud . . . . .	80 "	(40 ?)
Served Jabin . . . . .	20 "	
Had rest under Barak . . . . .	40 "	
Served Midian . . . . .	7 "	
Had rest under Gideon . . . . .	40 "	
Was ruled by Abimelech . . . . .	3 "	
Had Tola for Judge . . . . .	23 "	
Jair, Judge . . . . .	22 "	
Total . . . . .	301 years.	(261 ?)

Among these numbers, only the statement that after Ehud's victory there followed eighty years of rest, excites special attention. The number forty is by no means an unhistorical, round number. Nevertheless, it seems manifestly to express the duration of a period, particularly that of a generation. In forty years the generation of the desert died out (cf. Num. xiv. 33). The statements that after the achievements of Othniel, Deborah, and Gideon, respectively, a period of forty years passed in rest, bring to light the internal ground of renewed apostasy, already indicated in the introduction (ch. ii. 10), namely, that after the death of the generation which had witnessed the deeds of the heroes, another rose up which had no living remembrance of them. So much stress may properly be laid on this internal ground, as to make the number eighty after Ehud's exploit very remarkable in its singularity; so remarkable, in fact, as to incline one to suppose that the original reading was forty. Apart from every other consideration, this supposition would have much in its favor, if it were certain — which, however, despite the statement in ch. iv. 1, it is not — that the number in question was also intended to give the length of Ehud's subsequent life. It would also give a clearness unusual in chronological matters to the statement of Jephthah that three hundred years had passed since Israel gained a firm footing in Heshbon, beyond the Jordan (ch. xi. 26). For from the year in which Jephthah says this, backward to the first year of Chushan, would on this reckoning be  $261 + 18 = 279$  years. Twenty years would very satisfactorily fill up the gap between the last of Joshua's conquests and the commencement of the Aramaean domination. For although the kings of Silon and Og were defeated by Moses seven years earlier, the two and a half trans-Jordanic tribes came into *possession*, properly speaking, only after the conquest of Canaan (Josh. xxii.). If the number eighty be left untouched, we get a period of three hundred and nineteen years from Jephthah back to Chushan's domination, to which the interval of twenty (or twenty-seven) years must be added, for this length of time must in any case have elapsed between the entrance into Canaan and the invasion of Chushan (cf. ch. ii. 10, iii. 7). But it is natural to suppose that Jephthah in his letter to the king of Ammon would use the larger, not the smaller, number of which the case admitted, in order to prove the right of Israel to its land. The change of eighty into forty is also of importance with reference to other chronological combinations, as will appear farther on.

2. In ch. x. 7 the historian states that God, by reason of Israel's renewed apostasy, delivered them into the hands of the Philistines and Ammonites. The statement gives the impression that this domination of these nations over Israel was contemporaneous, but exerted over different parts of the land. The narrative then proceeds to speak first of the tyranny of Ammon, which lasted eighteen years, and then of that of the Philistines, which continued forty years. From the first of these oppressors, Jephthah delivered the eastern tribes; against the other, Samson *began* the war of liberation.

It certainly seems as if the author of our Book wished to convey the lesson that, as time went on, the condition of kingless Israel became continually worse. At first, hostile attacks had come from one side only; a great victory was then won, and "the land rested." After Gideon, this expression no longer occurs. Moreover, it is never said of subsequent heroes that "they judged;" and the duration of their official activity no longer reaches to forty years. These facts are not to be neglected in our chronological survey.

The combination of the chronological data of the Book of Judges with those found elsewhere, and especially with the well-known statement in 1 Kgs. vi. 1, according to which four hundred and eighty years intervened between the exodus from Egypt and the building of the temple, is still attended with difficulty. Doubtless, the difficulty is itself a most striking proof of the antiquity, originality, and independence of our Book. Had it been composed at a late period, by the same hand that wrote the Books of Kings, would not its author have attempted to get rid of these remarkable difficulties? But the fidelity of the Old Testament tradition never shows itself more clearly than in cases in which, according to modern notions, it had been so easy for an editor to remove all occasion for resorting to hypotheses. For without these, it is at this day impossible to produce agreement. We know that agreement must exist, — for, surely, ancient authors were not incapable of arithmetical addition! — but coercive, scientific proof of it, we do not possess. The opinions of even the oldest Jewish chronologists were divergent. In support of our hypothesis we adduce the passage 1 Sam. xii. 11, where it is said that "Jehovah sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel," and delivered Israel from their enemies round about. Now, Bedan is, without doubt, to be understood of Samson, the hero out of Dan. The passage, therefore, presents the peculiarity that it places Samson before Jephthah. Keil insists that the Ammonitish and Philistine oppressions occurred, not successively, but simultaneously. It is undoubtedly correct to say, that we are not first to sum up the numbers relating to the occurrences set forth in chaps. xi. and xii. thus: —

Ammon . . . . .	18 years.
Jephthah . . . . .	6 "
Ibzan . . . . .	7 "
Elon . . . . .	10 "
Abdon . . . . .	8 "
<hr/>	
Total . . . . .	49 years.

and then add the years of the Philistine domination and those of Samson. Just as in 1 Sam. xii. 11, Samson stands before Jephthah, so in Judg. x. 7 the Philistines are named before the Ammonites: "Jehovah gave Israel into the hands of the Philistines and of the sons of Ammon." That notwithstanding this Jephthah's deeds are first related, has its ground in the fact that in this way the achievements against the Philistines connect themselves with the principal wars of Israel in the days of Samuel and Saul. According to ch. xiii. 1, the Philistine domination lasted forty years. After Samson's great victory at Lehi, it is remarked, ch. xv. 20, and afterwards repeated, that "he judged Israel twenty years." These twenty years cannot be included in the forty. It is against the spirit of the Book, after such a victory to speak of Samson's "judging;" and yet to suppose that at the same time Israel continues to be given "into the hands of the Philistines." Therefore, when the prediction concerning Samson (ch. xiii. 5) only says that "he shall begin to deliver Israel," the meaning is that he will not thoroughly subdue them, as was done in the days of Samuel and David, for after the death of Samson their power again became dominant. Now, if this be undoubtedly correct, the supposition that the Ammonitish and Philistine servitudes commenced exactly at the same time, would compel us, notwithstanding 1 Sam. xii. 11, to place Jephthah long before Samson; for the Ammonitish domination lasted only eighteen years, and Jephthah ruled only six. The following conjecture is therefore to be preferred: With Gideon's death the land ceased "to have rest." Judges of forty years' service appear no more; but a servitude of forty years begins. The Philistine attack occurred perhaps soon after Abimelech, induced probably by reports of the discord that prevailed in Israel. While in the North and East Tola and Jair judged forty-five years, the Philistine servitude began in the southwest; and while Ammon oppressed Gilead in the East, Samson smote the Philistines in the southwest. The Gileadites make Jephthah their chieftain "because he had begun to smite the enemy" (cf. on ch. xi. 1, 2); for Samson also had become Judge when he had commenced to put down the Philistines (cf. on ch. xv. 20).

The combination of the chronological data of our Book with those of Samuel and especially the important one in 1 Kgs. vi. 1, is further facilitated by the fact that in 1 Sam. xii. 11, Eli is not named between Jephthah and Samuel. The inference from this omission is, that the forty years during which he ruled, are not to be separately taken into account. He was high-priest during the occurrence of the events in the North and South. The following additional conjectures may therefore be regarded as probable: The war spoken of in 1 Sam. iv. 1, commenced by Israel against the Philistines, may be held to indicate the new vigor which the victories of Samson and the terrible catastrophe at Gaza had infused into the people. About thirty years had probably elapsed since the death of Samson. Then follow twenty years of penitence on the part of Israel (1 Sam. vii. 2), dated from the exile of the ark and its restoration to Kirjath-jearim, that great event with which the Book of Judges is also acquainted. If next, according to ancient tradition, we add forty years for the time of Samuel and Saul, and forty for the reign of David, we arrive at the number four hundred and eighty in a manner sufficiently satisfactory and historically probable, as shown by the following tables:—

Wanderings in the desert . . . . .	40	Chushan . . . . .	8	ABIMELECH . . . . .	3	$\left. \begin{array}{l} \left. \begin{array}{l} \left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Philistines . . . . . 40} \\ \text{SAMSON . . . . . 20} \end{array} \right\} = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{From death} \\ \text{of Samson to} \\ \text{Sam'l, about 30} \end{array} \right\} = 90 \end{array} \right\}$
Conquest of the land . . . . .	7	OTHNIEL . . . . .	40	TOLA . . . . .	23	
Until Chushan . . . . .	20	Moab . . . . .	18	JAIR . . . . .	22	
—	—	EHUD . . . . .	40	Ammon . . . . .	18	
67	—	Jabin . . . . .	20	JEPHTHAH . . . . .	6	
	—	BARAK . . . . .	40	IBZAN . . . . .	7	
	—	Midian . . . . .	7	ELON . . . . .	10	
	—	GIDEON . . . . .	40	ABDON . . . . .	8	
	—		213		97	
	—					
SAMUEL before the victory (1 Sam. vii. 10) . . . . .	20	Therefore, From Exodus to Chushan . . . . .	67			
SAMUEL and SAUL . . . . .	40	Chushan to Gideon . . . . .	213			
DAVID . . . . .	40	Abimelech to Abdon . . . . .	97			
SOLOMON . . . . .	3	Samuel to Solomon . . . . .	103			
	—					
	103					480 years.

Those who accept the eighty years of Ehud, as has hitherto been done, are obliged with Keil to reduce the interval from the death of Moses to Chushan to seventeen years, and that from the death of Jair to Solomon to one hundred and twenty-three, whereby Samson's judgeship vanishes, and no account is taken of the twenty years preceding the victory under Samual.

3. In conclusion, we remark that in the historical sketch of the Apostle Paul, Acts xiii. 18-20, where he says, ver. 18, "and God nourished (ἐτροφόφρησεν) them forty years in the wilderness;" ver. 19, "and destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lot;" ver. 20, "and after that he gave them Judges for about four hundred and eighty years, until Samuel the prophet," the reading four hundred and eighty can scarcely be the original one. The apostle evidently had his eye on our canonical books: in vers. 17 and 18, on the Books of Moses; in ver. 19, on the Book of Joshua; in ver. 20, on the Book of Judges; for this is followed by references to the Books of Samuel. As he was undoubtedly acquainted with the number four hundred and eighty in Kings, he could not assign four hundred and fifty years to the period from Joshua to Samuel, with which moreover no ancient tradition coincided. The conjectural reading, three hundred and fifty, appears therefore to be preferable; and it is certainly not a matter of indifference that, adding the numbers one after another as was done by Jewish tradition in general, three hundred and fifty years would actually represent the period from Chushan to the end of the Philistine domination. True, it would show that Paul also read only forty years in connection with Ehud. The objection that Paul also assigns a definite period of forty years for the reign of Saul, for which the Old Testament gives no authority, is destitute of force. For the Book of Samuel gives no information at all concerning the length of this king's reign, and the Apostle followed the view, entertained also by Josephus (*Ant.* vi. 14, 9), according to which the reign of Saul, during and after the lifetime of Samuel, lasted forty years. It was sought in this way to explain 1 Sam. xiii. 1.

[NOTE BY THE TRANSLATOR. Keil and Bachmann, both of whom have repeatedly investigated the chronology of the Book of Judges, have come to conclusions somewhat different

from those of our author. As their schemes essentially agree, it will be sufficient to indicate that of Bachmann, the latest published and the least accessible to the English reader. It may be found in his commentary, *Das Buch der Richter*, vol. i. pp. 53-74. Its turning points so far as they differ from our author's, may be briefly stated as follows: (1.) It adheres in every instance to the numbers given; hence, the period from Chushan to Gideon inclusive (cf. the table above), becomes two hundred and fifty-three years. (2.) It makes the forty years Philistine servitude come to an end with the victory near Mizpeh. (3.) While it makes the Ammonitish and Philistine servitudes synchronistic in the main, as required by ch. x. 7, it supposes the beginning of the Philistine to fall from three to five years later than that of the Ammonitish oppression. If they began simultaneously, it would follow that a new Judge, Abdon, was somewhere recognized *after* Samuel had already assembled *all* the house of Israel, and had shown himself the Judge and deliverer of *all* Israel (cf. 1 Sam. vii. 3, 5, 6), which is not likely. Abdon, however, having once been recognized as Judge, before the victory under Samuel, might continue to be regarded as such until his death. It is only necessary, therefore, to bring down the beginning of the Philistine servitude far enough to allow of this previous recognition. (4.) It includes the twenty years of Samson in the "days of the Philistines," according to ch. xv. 20. It supposes Samson to begin his work as a young man of eighteen or nineteen years of age (cf. ch. xiv. 4 ff.), and thus allows his birth to fall after the beginning of the Philistine servitude, as demanded by ch. xiii. 5. (5.) As to Eli, since his pontificate ended twenty years before the victory of Mizpeh, its beginning must antedate the commencement of the Philistine oppression by twenty, and the Ammonitish by from fifteen to seventeen years. And, in fact, the earlier years of Eli's pontificate afford no traces of hostile oppression. The people journey to the great festivals regularly and securely (1 Sam. i. 3, 7, 21, 24; ii. 19); and even the sins of the sons of Eli, by which the people also are led astray (1 Sam. ii. 17, 24), are such as bespeak a time of careless security and prosperity. The following table exhibits the results thus obtained, for the time beginning with the Ammonitish and ending with the Philistine oppression. The figures at the left denote years after the death of Jair:—

1	Ammonitish servitude begins in the East, and continues eighteen years.	Eli is in the seventeenth year of his pontificate.
4	.....	In this year or one year earlier or later, the Philistine servitude begins in the West.
18	Jephthah breaks the Ammonitish yoke, and judges six years.	
22	.....	Samson begins his career, as a young man of eighteen to nineteen years.
24	Ibzan, Judge, seven years.	Eli dies. Samuel.
31	Elon, Judge, ten years.	
41	Abdon becomes Judge, and rules eight years	
42	.....	Samson dies.
44	The third year of Abdon's Judgeship.	The victory near Mizpeh, under Samuel, ends the Philistine servitude, 1 Sam. vii.

Now, allowing ten years, instead of Dr. Cassel's twenty, for the interval between the division of the land and the invasion of Chushan, and retaining the eighty years of Ehud, we get,—

From the Exodus to Chushan,	57 years.
From Chushan to Gideon,	253 "
From Abimelech to Mizpeh,	92 "
Samuel and Saul, 40; David, 40; Solomon, 3,	83 "
Total,	485 years.

This total, which it would be more proper to express variably as four hundred and eighty-four to four hundred and eighty-six, is not so far away from four hundred and eighty as to occasion any difficulty. In the first place it may be questioned whether the three years of Abimelech ought to be reckoned in; and in the second place, it is highly probable that some of the periods include fractional years, so that the last year of one and the first of the next properly form but one, whereas in the process of addition they come to stand for two. But are not ten years too short to cover the interval between the division of the land and the road of Chushan-Rishathaim? No, says Bachmann, p. 72 ff., "for, 1. Nothing demands a



lengthened period between the death of Joshua and the beginning of the Mesopotamian servitude. The passage at ch. ii. 11 ff. does not describe an earlier visitation than the Mesopotamian, but merely gives a general view of the causes and consequences of all the visitations about to be related. Under the דִּיר אֲחֵר, the "other generation," cf. ch. ii. 10, neither a chronological generation of forty years (Bertheau), nor a *familia eminens*, that placed itself at the head of the nation (M. Hartmann), is to be understood. Nor does the remark of ch. ii. 7, about the elders who "outlived Joshua," require any considerable number of years. It merely affirms that they outlived him, without saying that they outlived him long. If in the second year of the Exodus these elders were eighteen or nineteen years old (Num. xiv. 29), at the division of the land, that is 38 + 7 years later, they would be sixty-three or sixty-four; and ten years more, until the first hostile oppression, would suffice fully to bring them to that age which according to Ps. xc. 10 constituted the highest average of human life even in the time of Moses. Nor, finally, is it necessary to assign much time to the process of moral deterioration in Israel (ch. ii. 6 ff.); for this began and went on progressively in and even before the days of the elders, and it was only the completed apostasy to idolatry that ensued after their death. 2. From Josh. xiii. 1, compared with xiv. 10 ff. it is evident that Joshua cannot have continued to live long after the division of the land. While the second of these passages represents Caleb, at the age of eighty-five years, still full of youthful strength and perfectly ready to undertake the conquest of his inheritance, the first gives the great age of Joshua as the reason for the command to divide the land, although the conquest was yet far from complete. And since exactly the same expression recurs in ch. xxiii. 1, 2, it is impossible to suppose that the farewell gatherings of chaps. xxiii. and xxiv., which were held shortly before the death of Joshua (ch. xxiii. 14), took place many years later. Neither the יָמִים רַבִּים, "many days," of ch. xxiii. 1, nor the circumstance that, according to ch. xix. 50, Joshua built a city and lived in it, can prove the contrary; for a few years' time satisfies them both. Nor is there any ground in Ex. xxxiii. 11 and Num. xi. 28 for inferring that Joshua must have lived a considerable time after the division of the land; for the term נָעַר denotes office, not age, and מִבְּחָרָיו, even if we explain it "from his youth" ("of his chosen ones," is probably to be preferred, cf. the Sept. and Vulg.), does not assert that Joshua was then a young man. On the other hand, it is only when we assume that Joshua died at a relatively early date, that the contents of Judg. i. 1-21 appear in their true light. But especially decisive for the utmost possible reduction of the length of the interval in question is the passage Judg. xi. 26. According to this passage, three hundred years had elapsed since Israel took possession of the land on the east of the Jordan. Now, between the Mesopotamian invasion and the death of Jair, there lies a period of three hundred and one, or, excluding Abimelech, two hundred and ninety-eight years. It is evident, therefore, that, reckoning Jephthah's three hundred years from the dismissal of the eastern tribes (Josh. xxii.) to the attack of the Ammonites (Judg. x. 7), the shorter the preceding period be computed, the closer becomes the agreement between the historical fact and the approximate number of Jephthah. It is manifestly more likely that three hundred and eight to three hundred and eleven, than that three hundred and thirty to three hundred and forty or more years, should be roundly represented as three hundred. We hold, therefore, with Lightfoot (*Opp.* i. 42), S. Schmid, Vitranga, Keil, and others, hat an interval of about ten years, as left at our disposal by our computation of the chronology of the whole period, is in fact fully sufficient for the events between the division and the first subjugation of the land; and we accordingly reject, as wholly groundless extensions of the chronological frame, the assumption, since Josephus (*Ant.* v. 1, 29; vi. 5, 4) almost become traditional, that twenty-five years are to be allowed for Joshua, and eighteen for the "elders;" the computation of various Rabbins (*Sed. Olam*, Isaaki, Abr. Zakut, and others), which assigns twenty-eight years to Joshua and the "elders" together; and every other similar hypothesis." — Tr.]

### § 5. Critical and Exegetical Helps.

1. In the criticism and translation of the Hebrew text, constant use has been made of the large *Rabbinic Bible* published at Venice, 1617-1618 by Petrus and Laurentius Bragadin, after the Bomberg edition. Compare the preface by Judah Arjeh of Modena, corrector of the work. Use has also been made of the *Biblia Universa*, published in 1657, at Leipzig, by Christian Kirchner, after the edition of B. A. Montanns. Compare the preface prefixed to

the work by the Dean and Theological Faculty of the University of Leipzig. Also of the *Biblia Hebraica* of Joh. H. Michaelis, Halle, 1720; the *Biblia* of Döderlein and Meisner, as edited by Knapp, 1819; and the edition of the *Book of Judges*, with a German translation and commentary, by Mair Oberrnik, Fürth, 1805.

A treatment of the text such as has recently again been attempted by the wild theories of Geiger, Dozy, and others, is at variance with the laws of objective scientific criticism, and renders textual tradition, language, and contents so many footfalls for subjective caprice. Its application is the more to be lamented, since it also increases the difficulties of such criticism as is both necessary and in accord with the spirit of Holy Scripture. But we must not be hindered by excesses of this kind from acknowledging, that it is more in keeping with piety toward the sacred volume to venture upon textual emendations in a few passages than to reject them. This conviction has governed us in the exposition of several passages (cf. on ch. ii. 3, iv. 15, v. 11, vii. 6 and 8), and especially in the treatment of ch. xviii. 30, where it is shown that the antiquity of the current reading is by no means a guaranty of its correctness, but only a proof of the fidelity of the Masoretic tradition.

It is unfortunately impracticable here to institute a closer collation of the Hebrew text with the LXX. and the Targum, as also with Josephus, than has been incidentally done in the exposition. It is, however, a matter sufficiently necessary, not to be neglected hereafter. The beginnings made by Ziegler (*Bemerkungen über das Buch d. Richter*, in the *Theol. Abhandl.*, Göttingen, 1791) and Frankel (in his *Vorstudien zur Septuaginta*, Leipzig, 1841) are certainly still in want of a thorough continuation.

The Syriac version of the Books of Judges and Ruth by Paul of Tella (beginning of the 7th century), has been published at Copenhagen, by Th. Skat Rørdam: *Libri Judicum et Ruth, secundum versionum Syriaco-Hexaplares*, Havniæ, 1859. The exposition of the Midrash on the Book of Judges, is given in the *Jalkut Shimeoni*, by R. Simeon, of Frankfurt, Venice edition, printed by Bragadin, tom. ii.

For assistance in gaining acquaintance with Talmudic expositions, the following works may be consulted: *Nachalath Shimeoni*, by R. Simeon, of Lissa, ed. Wandsbeck; *Toledoth Jakob*, by R. Jakob Sasportas, Amsterdam, 1657, 4to; *Sepher Mareh Kohen*, by R. Isachar, Cracow edition, 1689, 4to. The Jewish expositors of the Middle Ages, R. Solomon Isaaki (i. e. Raschi, frequently but improperly called Jarchi), R. David Kimchi (Redak), R. Levi ben Gerson (Rabag), and other expositions, are found in the large Rabbinic Bibles. The commentary of R. Isaak Abarbanel on the *Propheta Priores* appeared at Leipzig, 1686.

Expositions, partly excellent, of passages of our Book, by the Caraites Aaron, are found in Wolf's *Bibliotheca Hebræa*, Hamburg, 1715-43. A Jewish German translation in rhyme is found in *Kohleth Jakob*, Prague, 1763, but with expositions and legends intermixed. A better, older, and literal Jewish German translation appeared at Amsterdam, 1679, fol. In more recent times several synagogue versions of the Holy Scriptures have been printed. Of these that which appeared under the conduct of Dr. Zunz adheres most closely to the Masoretic text, cf. *Orient. Literaturbl.*, 1840, p. 618.

The Book of Judges as a whole did not receive separate and special treatment at the hands of the earlier Christian exegesis. We must here refer to the general introductions to the O. T. for information concerning editions and expositions which include our Book. Jerome, Theodoret, and, later, Rhabanus Maurus and Rupert von Deutz, might be particularly mentioned.

Among the later Roman Catholic expositors Serarius stands preëminent on account of his diligence and voluminousness: *Commentarii in libros Judicum et Ruth*, Paris, 1611, Moguntia, 1619. Among Protestant expositors Brentius, Bucer, P. Martyr, Chyträus, Seb. Schmid, Osiander, Starke, and Drusius, are still worthy of attention. The commentary of Le Clerc began the rationalistic mode of exposition, and has furnished it with most of its materials. It is only forty years since the Book began again to receive any real attention. For ten years the commentary of Studer, *Das Buch der Richter, grammatisch und historisch erklärt*, Bern, 1835, almost entirely controlled the exposition. Valuable matter was contributed by Hengstenberg, *die Authentie des Pentateuchs* [translated into English by Ryland, under the title *Dissertations on the Genuineness of the Pentateuch*, Edinburgh, 1847. — Tr.]. Still longer than Studer did Bertheau's exposition, *Das Buch der Richter und Rut*, Leipzig, 1845, maintain its prominence, to which for that reason special attention is given in the present work. The first volume of C. R. Keil's *Biblischer Commentar über die Prophetischen Geschichtsbücher des A. T.*, containing Joshua, Judges, and Ruth (Leipzig, 1863), appeared

after the greater part of our Book was finished. The author's theological attitude, diligence, and erudition are in no need of special characterization in this place. [Since the publication of Dr. Cassel's work, the first volume of a new commentary by Dr. Joh. Bachmann, Professor at Rostock, has appeared, entitled, *Das Buch der Richter, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Geschichte seiner Auslegung und kirchlichen Verwendung erklärt*, etc., Berlin, Ersten Bandes erste Hälfte, 1868, Zweite Hälfte, 1869. Theologically, the author stands on substantially the same ground with Cassel and Keil. His work is thorough and exhaustive. For English works on the whole Bible, cf. the commentary on Matthew, p. 19. We here add: Bush, *Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Judges*, New York; and the *Books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth; with Notes and Introductions* by Chr. Wordsworth, D. D., London, 1865, forming Part I. of vol. ii. of *The Holy Bible; with Notes*, etc., by the same author. Dr. Wordsworth is learned and devout, but somewhat too much given to allegorizing. — Tr.]

It cannot be desirable to enumerate here all the exegetical introductions and other writings more remotely connected with the business of exposition. For such enumeration we refer to Danz's *Universalwörterbuch*, to the works named by Dr. Lange in the commentary on Genesis, and to the older general commentaries of Starke, Lisco, and Gerlach. It is sufficient here to mention the *Introductions* of Hävernick and Keil, Ewald's *Geschichte Israels*, and Stähelin's *Untersuchungen über den Pentateuch, die Bücher Joshua, Richter*, etc., Berlin, 1843. Much that is excellent — to confine ourselves to what specially belongs here — is contained in the little work of Prof. Wahl, *Ueber den Verfasser des Buches der Richter*, a "programme" of the Gymnasium und Realschule at Ellwangen, 1859. Compare also Nägelsbach, s. v. *Richter*, in Herzog's *Real Encyclopädie*, vol. xiii.; and in general, the articles of this encyclopædia on the several Judges.

On the chronology of the Book, the following works deserve to be mentioned: Jewish — the *Sepher Juchasin*, by Abraham Scuto, Amsterdam, 1717; *Tsemach David*, by David Gans, in the edition of Vorstius, Hebrew and Latin, 1644, 4to; and *Seder Haddoroth*, by R. Jehiel, of Minsk, 1810, fol. Herzfeld, *Chronologia Judicum et primorum Regum Hebræorum*, Berolini, 1836; and Bachmann, *Symbolarum ad tempora Judicum recte constituenda specimen* (Rostock University "Programme" for 1860). The very latest conjectures may be found in Røckerath, *Bibl. Chronologie*, Münster, 1865.

2. Of writings treating single parts of the Book of Judges, the number is larger. The Song of Deborah has been especially favored. We mention the following: <sup>1</sup> Lette, *Animadversiones Sacrae*, L. Bat. 1759. Ruckersfelder, *Sylloge comentt. et observatt. philol. exeget.*, Deventiæ, 1762. Wilh. Abrah. Teller, *Uebers. des Segens Jakobs und Mosis, insgleichen des Liedes der Israeliten und der Debora*, etc., Halle and Helmst., 1766. Schnurrer, *Diss. in Deboræ-Canticum*, Tüb. 1775 (cf. his *Dissert. Phil. Criticæ*, Gothæ, 1790). Köhler, *Nachlese einiger Anmerk. über das Siegeslied der Deb.* in Eichhorn's *Repertorium* for 1780, p. 163 ff. Hollmann, *Comment. phil. crit. in Carmen Deboræ*, Lips. 1818. Köhler, in the *Studien und Kritiken* for 1831, pp. 72–76. Kemink, *Commentatio de Carmine Deboræ*, Traj. ad Rhen., 1840. Kalkar, *Questionum Biblic. Specimen*, I., Othinæ, 1835. Böttger, in Käufler's *Biblischen Studien* (only to ver. 23), Dresden and Leipzig, 1842–44. Gumpach, *Alttestamentlichen Studien*, Heidelberg, 1852. Sack, *Die Lieder in den historischen Büchern des A. T.*, Barmen, 1864. Among translations, that of Herder, in his *Geist der Hebräischen Poesie*, ii. 196 (Cotta's edition of his works, 1852), still holds its merited rank. Little known, and yet not unimportant, is that of J. C. W. Scherer, in *Irene*, a monthly periodical by G. A. v. Halem, Münster, 1804, i. 44. Less valuable is *Deboræ, a Portrait of Female Character*, by E. Minch, in *Minerva*, an annual, for 1828, p. 339. Many excellent remarks on the Song of Deborah are found in Lowth's celebrated book on Hebrew Poetry; but the annotations of Schmitt (in *Auszüge aus Lowth's Vorlesungen*, Dantzig, 1793) are worthless.

In the exposition of the Song below, compression has been so much sought after, that its brevity, in view of the many new explanations that are offered, may be deemed a fault. Some improvement may perhaps be made in this respect hereafter.

The history of Jephthah has experienced an equally abundant treatment. To the literature mentioned in the exposition below, we here add the following: Reinke, *Beiträge zur Erklärung des A. T.*, Münster, 1852. Very sensible remarks against the assumption that Jephthah's daughter was sacrificed are found in Schedius, *Syngramma de Diis Germanis*, Hale, 1728. A discourse on "Jephthah's Sacrifice," with special reference to the importance of vows of

<sup>1</sup> The Jewish traditions concerning Deborah are given in a popular form in *Beth Israel*, Amsterdam, 1724.

homage, may be found among the *Discourses* of the Stolberg Chancellor, Joh. Titius, Halberstadt, 1678. F. Ranke, also, in his *Klaglied der Hebräer*, felt himself obliged to follow the old view. It is a curiosity of uncommon ignorance that in the French Opera *L'Enfant Prodigue*, of Sue and Auber, the bride of the Prodigal, that is to say, a woman, is named Jephthah.

Roskoff, in his work *Die Simsonssage, nach ihrer Entstehung, Form, und Bedeutung, und der Heraklesmythus*, Leipzig, 1860, gives the literature of those writings in which Samson is put on a parallel with Hercules. The author's own zeal for the parallelism is far more moderate than that of E. Meier, for instance, in his *Gesch. der poetischen Nationalliteratur der Hebräer*, Leipzig, 1856. But even his admissions we have not been able to consider well founded and trustworthy. We cannot believe, for instance, that there is such similarity between the answer to Samson's prayer, after his exploit at Lehi, and the myth which recounts how Hercules, when unable to sleep on account of crickets, got rid of them, as to make it a safe foundation for scientific results. And it is only the thorough-going establishment of the historical and moral as well as ideal *difference* between the two characters that can give any real significance to other analogies that may exist, and that appear to suggest themselves so plainly. In the commentary on the narrative we have engaged in no polemics, but have attempted a positive exposition of the ideas contained in it.

Single parts of Samson's life were formerly frequently treated. As against the boundlessly insipid and wretched views of the so-called rationalistic exposition, which reached its acme in Baur's *Biblischer Moral*, 1803, i. 195 ff. the modern mythical apprehension is, to a certain extent, a real advance. But it is only by setting aside the subjective party opinions of the day, and by adopting a mode of apprehending the narrative that shall be at once objective, historical, and congenial to its contents, that exegesis can claim to be scientific or be capable of advancing science. A beautiful eulogium of Samson as compared with Hercules is found in Petri Labbe *Elogia Sacra*, Lips. 1686, p. 667:—

“Herenli coetaneus verus Hercules fuit;  
Quæ in illo fabula, in hoc fuere miracula.”

“Samson's Foxes” are treated of by Paullini, in his *Philosoph. Luststunden*, i. 147. Essays on the jawbone in Lehi are named below. Schiller, perhaps, had the miracle of Lehi in mind in his ballad *Der Bürgschaft*, verses twelve and thirteen, where Möros in answer to prayer is delivered from thirst by water issuing from the rock. In the *Wiltinsage* (ed. Peringskiöld, p. 272), Sigurd, who has freely allowed himself to be bound, at the right time rends all his cords asunder. Thackeray relates (in his *Four Georges*, ch. vii.) that when George III. of England was blind and mentally diseased, he nevertheless selected himself the music for sacred concerts, and always from the *Samson* of Milton and Händel, and all his selections had reference to blindness, imprisonment, and suffering. There is a dramatic poem in three acts, by Sack, entitled *Simson*, Zurich, 1854.

The narrative in Judg. i. 17 is supposed to be improved and supplemented in the work of the Leiden Professor, Dozy: *De Israeliten te Mekka, van Davids tyd tot in de vyfde eeuw onser tydrekening*, Haarlem, 1864. German translation, Leipzig, 1864. If any book can bring contempt and ridicule on philological and ethnographical investigations and expositions, it is this volume. Few books can ever have been written whose authors presumed, to such an extent, and with such naive boldness, to substitute subjective arbitrariness for objective tact and moderation in the treatment of history and language. It is here made clear how little a knowledge of Arabic literature implies a fitness for historical investigation and conjecture. It happens unfortunately too often that some knowledge of technology imagines itself to be master of art, and that some acquaintance with grammatical forms deems itself proficient in exegesis. Let it not be thought that this judgment is here written down because Prof. Dozy holds the freest views of the Bible, considers Abraham and Sarah to be myths, and subscribes to Geiger's opinion that the Jews falsified Scripture. For Prof. Dozy, the credibility of Scripture is conditioned by the necessities of his hypothesis. If a passage suits him, it is by all means to be accepted; if it does not suit him, the reasons for rejecting it are at once apparent. The book, likely to dazzle and deceive by reason of its unequalled audacity and the splendor of its exterior, deserves the severest censure, because it treads under foot all lawful methods of scientific and philological research. A few sentences, having reference to the above-mentioned passage will show this.

We pass over his identification of the fact recorded at Num. xxi. 2, 3, with that related in

Judg. i. 17, for therein he follows others. But he thinks that the reading of the Syriac and Arabic versions, "Simeon went with Judah his brother," is better than that of the Hebrew text (which the Sept. has also), "Judah went with Simeon his brother." The Hebrew text, he thinks, was altered by the Jewish doctors, "who begrudged Simeon the first rôle." Now, the matter stands thus: In ver. 3 Judah invites Simeon to assist him to subjugate the territory allotted to him, promising that he will afterwards help him (Simeon) to take possession of his also. Simeon consents, "and," says the writer, "Simeon went with him (Judah). Simeon therefore stands first in this instance, and yet the envy of the Jews did not alter the clause. When the turn came to Simeon's territory, to which Zephath belongs, Judah rendered assistance to Simeon; consequently ver. 17 says, "and Judah went with Simeon." If rank comes into consideration at all in this expression, it belongs to the second named, to whom he who goes with him merely renders assistance. If the Peshito reversed the order in ver. 17, it was only to bring about a verbal agreement with ver. 3 b.

Simeon and Judah had smitten the Canaanites in Zephath, inflicted the ban upon them, and given to Zephath the name Hormah (prop. Chormah) from *cherem*, cf. below on ch. i. 17. Now this putting under the ban was not anything peculiar to these two tribes. Moses had done it in behalf of all Israel (Num. xxi. 3). Its infliction throughout the conquest was expressly enjoined, Deut. vii. 2. Joshua executed it in Jericho, in Ai, and everywhere else (cf. Josh. vi. 17, vii. 10, etc.). But Dozy finds in the ban (*cherem*) something peculiar to the tribe of Simeon; and combining this assumption with the narrative in 1 Chron. iv. 24-43, where (ver. 41) we read of a ban executed by the tribe of Simeon, he arrives at the following conclusion: "Since the sons of Simeon made and inflicted the ban (יִחְרְמוּ), it follows that they made a *herem*." The place therefore "was called Herem or Hormah." But what place in Arabia—for that the place was in Arabia similar reasonings have previously proved—could be called Herem but Mecca! For Herem means also a "place consecrated to God," and Mecca is called Haram, which is equivalent to Herem. Therefore, the battle of the sons of Simeon took place in Mecca; and even the name Mecca dates from it; for *maka raba* signifies a great defeat, to wit, that which the enemy there suffered at the hands of Simeon. The Simeonites came to the entrance of Gedor, on the east side of the valley (1 Chron. iv. 39). Now, of course, the walls of the old temple in Mecca were called *al gadr* (*al gidar* = the wall); consequently, Gedor is to be read Geder, and signifies the temple in Mecca, to which they came. It must, however, be read Geder Baal, although the second word be wanting; for 2 Chron. xxvi. 7 speaks of Arabians who dwelt in Gur Baal, and *Gur* is to be read *Geder*. The LXX. at this place speaks of Arabians dwelling ἐν τῇ πέτρας. Common sense would think of Petra; but Dozy knows that they mean the black stone in Mecca, etc.

Dozy says at the beginning, that exegesis requires so much learning only because it deals with "Hebrew books." Unquestionably! for where but in Hebrew exegesis would one dare to be guilty of such scientific folly! Had one ventured to do this in the domain of classical philology, he would have experienced the fate with which the philosophers menaced Homer when they threatened to drive him from the stadium with scourges.

All science becomes impossible, when credible objective tradition is made the plaything of subjective caprice. We cannot here enter farther into details; these must be left for other places. For those who know, it is enough to say, that if such arguments are valid, the next thing will be, instead of the Israelites in Mecca, a book on "the Meccans in Zion."

Science, too, needs to experience the promise written in Ezek. xxxix. 29.

### § 6. The Course of Thought.<sup>1</sup>

The Book derives its name from the Judges whom God raised up to guide and deliver Israel. It begins, therefore, by depicting the sins and consequent sufferings into which Israel fell after the death of Joshua, and which rendered the judgeship necessary.

[<sup>1</sup> The following paragraphs were written by the author as "Preliminary Observations" to the "Homiletical Hints," which he gives in a body at the close of the commentary, and not, as in the other volumes of this work, after the several sections to which they refer. It was thought advisable in translating the book to alter this arrangement and make it conform to that observed in other parts of the general work. The more detailed analysis of the contents, as also the formal division of the work itself into parts and sections, together with the *resumés* placed at the head of each division throughout the work, have been added by the translator, guided for the most part by hints, and largely even in the language of the author himself. It is proper to add that these are the only additions that have not been inclosed in brackets.—Ta.]

After this introduction follows the main body of the work, which treats of the history of Israel under the Judges themselves. The raising up of the successive heroes exhibits with ever-growing lustre the gracious guidance of God, revealing itself more and more wonderfully as the distress into which Israel falls becomes more pressing. The selection of the several judges and heroes forms a climax of divine wonders, in which the multiformity of Jehovah's saving resources shows itself in contrast with the monotonousness of Israel's sins, and the workings of His grace in the hidden and obscure in opposition to that pride of the people in which their falls originated. The histories of the Judges, especially those of Othniel, Ehud, Deborah and Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson, through whom and their adherents the great and merciful deeds of God do show themselves in ever-increasing fullness, form the sections into which the Book may be divided. From Othniel to Samson, under whom the history returns to the tribe of Judah from which it started, every Judge illustrates a new side of God's wonderful assistance. This manifoldness characterizes the judgeship. It rests on no tradition. The changes of the persons and tribes entrusted with its functions, interrupt its efficacy. The narrative gradually indicates the want of unity, despite the abundance of strength. Hence that which peculiarly characterizes the judgeship, marks at the same time its imperfection. For even times of peace admitted of such occurrences as those which fill the closing part of the Book, after the record of Samson's death.

In the closing part of the Book, the decay of the priesthood, the arbitrariness of individuals, and the abominations of licentiousness, passion, and discord, are traced back to the want of a settled, permanent government. The close of the Book of Judges forms an introduction to the Books of Kings.

The following analysis indicates a little more in detail the course of the narrative as sketched above:—

#### PART FIRST.

Introductory delineation of the condition of Israel after the death of Joshua; sin, and the judgments entailed by it, rendering the judgeship necessary. Chaps. i.—iii. 4.

*1st Section.* The relations of Israel towards the remaining Canaanites, as forming the background of the ensuing history. Believing and obedient Israel enjoys divine direction and favor, is united within and victorious without; but faithlessness and disobedience lay the foundations of apostasy and servitude. Ch. i.

*2d Section.* The religious degeneracy of Israel which resulted from its disobedient conduct with respect to the Canaanites, and the severe discipline which it rendered necessary, as explaining the alternations of apostasy and servitude, repentance and deliverance, characteristic of the period of the Judges. Chaps. ii.—iii. 4.

#### PART SECOND.

The history of Israel under the Judges: a history of sin, ever repeating itself, and of divine grace, constantly devising new means of deliverance. Meanwhile, however, the imperfections of the judicial institute display themselves, and prepare the way for the appointment of a king. Chaps. iii. 5.—xvi.

*1st Section.* The servitude to Chushan Rishathaim, King of Mesopotamia. Othniel, the Judge of blameless and happy life. Ch. iii. 5—11.

*2d Section.* The servitude to Eglon, King of Moab. Ehud, the Judge with the double-edged dagger. Shamgar, the deliverer with the ox-goad. Ch. iii. 12—31.

*3d Section.* The servitude to Jabin, King of Canaan. Deborah, the female Judge of fiery spirit, and Barak, the military hero. Chaps. iv., v.

*4th Section.* The incursions and oppressions of the Midianites. Gideon, the Judge who refuses to be king. Chaps. vi.—viii.

*5th Section.* The usurped rule of Abimelech, the fratricide and thorn-bush king. Ch. ix.

*6th Section.* Two Judges in quiet, peaceful times: Tolah of Issachar, and Jair the Gileadite. Ch. x. 1—5.

*7th Section.* The oppression of the Midianites. Jephthah, the Judge of the vow. Chaps. x. 6—xii. 7.

*8th Section.* Three Judges of uneventful lives in peaceful times: Ibzan of Bethlehem, Elon the Zebulonite, and Abdon the Pirathonite. Ch. xii. 8—15.

*9th Section.* The oppression of the Philistines. Samson the Nazarite Judge. Chaps. xiii.—xvi.

## PART THIRD.

The conclusion of the Book, tracing the evils of the period, the decay of the priesthood, the self-will of individuals, and the prevalence of licentiousness, passion, and discord, to the absence of a fixed and permanent form of government. Chaps. xvii.-xxi.

*1st Section.* The history of Micah's private temple and image-worship: showing the individual arbitrariness of the times, and its tendency to subvert and **corrupt** the religious institutions of Israel. Chaps. xvii., xviii.

*2d Section.* The story of the infamous deed perpetrated at Gibeah, and its terrible consequences: another illustration of the evils that result when "every man does what is **good** in his own eyes." Chaps. **xix.-xxi.**





# THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

## PART FIRST.

INTRODUCTORY Delineation of the Condition of Israel after the Death of Joshua ; Sin, and the Judgments entailed by it, rendering the Judgeship necessary.

## FIRST SECTION.

THE RELATIONS OF ISRAEL TOWARDS THE REMAINING CANAANITES AS FORMING THE BACKGROUND OF THE ENSUING HISTORY. BELIEVING AND OBEDIENT ISRAEL ENJOYS DIVINE DIRECTION AND FAVOR, IS UNITED WITHIN AND VICTORIOUS WITHOUT ; BUT FAITHLESSNESS AND DISOBEDIENCE LAY THE FOUNDATIONS OF APOSTASY AND SERVITUDE.

*"Who shall first go up against the Canaanite?"*

## CHAPTER I. 1, 2.

Now [And] after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children [sons] of Israel asked the Lord [Jehovah],<sup>1</sup> saying, Who shall go up for us<sup>2</sup> against<sup>3</sup> the 2 Canaanites first to fight against them? And the Lord [Jehovah] said, Judah shall go up: behold,<sup>4</sup> I have delivered the land into his hand.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL

[<sup>1</sup> Ver. 1. — The author renders: "the sons of Israel asked God;" and by way of explanation adds the following note: "Thus do we intend constantly to render יהוה, on the ground that it expresses the absolute idea of the true God in Israel. Since אלהים is also used in connection with heathen worship, it corresponds to our 'Godhead, Deity' or 'the Gods.'" In this translation the word *Jehovah* will be inserted. — Tr.]

[2 Ver. 1. — מִי־יֵעָלֶה. Dr. Cassel takes יֵעָלֶה in a partitive sense, and translates, "who of us shall go up." It is more properly regarded as *dat. commodi*: for, (1.) The partitive relation, though sometimes indicated by הָ (apparently however, only after numerals, cf. Ges. *Lex.* s. v. הָ, 4 b), would be more properly expressed by אֶל or מִן; and (2.) if the writer had intended to connect יֵעָלֶה with וְיִי, he would not have placed the verb between them. cf. Is. xlviii. 14, Job. xxi. 8. As it stands, the expression is a perfect grammatical parallel with Is. vi. 8: מִי־יֵעָלֶה לְנֹכַח יְהוָה. Moreover, יֵעָלֶה, in the sense of יֵעָלֶה or יֵעָלֶה, adds nothing which is not already implied in the words, מִי־יֵעָלֶה לְנֹכַח יְהוָה, "who shall first go up." On the other hand, taken in its natural sense, as indirect object after the verb, it expresses the thought that whoever "goes first," makes a beginning, will do it for the advantage of all. What that advantage was, may be seen from our author's exposition of the inquiry. — Tr.]

[3 Ver. 1. — נֹכַח, properly, *towards*. Dr. Cassel has *gegen*, which means both "towards" and "against." The same preposition occurs in vers. 10, 11; and though translated "against," is not to be taken in the sense of נֹכַח. The

hostile intent in these passages is not expressed by  $\text{לִי}$ , but appears from the context. In this verse, attention to the proper meaning of  $\text{לִי}$ , does away with the appearance of tautology which in English the inquiry presents — Tr.]

[<sup>4</sup> Ver. 2. — Dr. Cassel: "Wohlan! Up then!" On this rendering of  $\text{וְהָיָה}$ , cf. the foot-note on p. 26. — Tr.]

#### EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 1. And after the death of Joshua it came to pass. This commencement corresponds entirely with that of Joshua, ch. i. 1: "and after the death of Moses, the servant of Jehovah, it came to pass." On account of this correspondence the usual addition, "the son of Nun," but also the designation "servant of Jehovah," elsewhere applied to Joshua (Josh. xxiv. 29; Judg. ii. 8), is omitted. A similar correspondence exists between Josh. xxiv. 29, and Dent. xxxiv. 5. Wherever Joshua is compared with Moses, care is taken to indicate at the same time the important difference between them. Joshua also is a "servant of Jehovah," but not in the same high sense as his master. Joshua also died, but not like Moses "through the mouth of Jehovah" ( $\text{פִּי יְהוָה}$ ). Moses was clothed with the authority of *origination and establishment*. He had been the Father (cf. Num. xi. 12), the Priest (Ex. xxiv. 8), the sole Regent (Num. xvi. 13), and Judge (Ex. xviii. 16), of his tribes. He transferred the priesthood from *himself* to Aaron (Ex. xxviii. 1); he selected those who assisted him in deciding minor lawsuits (Ex. xviii. 21; Num. xi. 17). He took seventy men of the "elders of the people," to bear with him the burden of governing the tribes (Num. xi. 16); he imparted of his own honor to Joshua, that the congregation

1 If in Ex. vi. 20, 26, the order is "Aaron and Moses," it is only to indicate Aaron as the first-born; hence, ver. 27 of the same chapter, as if by way of correction, says, "these are that Moses and Aaron." For the same reason Num. iii. 1 reads: "These are the generations of Aaron and Moses." As the order is everywhere Moses and Aaron, so it is naturally also "Moses and Eleazar." This difference in the relations of Moses and Joshua respectively to the Priest, it is important to notice. For it is of itself sufficient to show the unreasonableness of Bertheau's assertion (*Buch der Richter*, p. 9), that Num. xxvii. 21 is to be so taken that Joshua is to ask, not before, but for, instead of, Eleazar, whether he shall go out: that is (as he thinks), "in a manner just as valid as if the high-priest had inquired of Jehovah." To inquire of God by means of the Urim, the Priest alone could do, for he alone had it. Moses and the prophets received revelations immediately; but when the Urim is mentioned, the Priest is the only possible medium. The passages to which Bertheau refers, speak against his assertion. The LXX. are as plain as the Hebrew text. In 1 Sam. xxiii. 10, it is the Priest who inquires of God for David. Josephus, Ant. iv. 7, 2, is an irrelevant passage, and therefore cannot be cited at all. Moreover, Josephus himself puts Eleazar before Joshua, when he speaks of both (iv. 7, 3). Nor is there any good ground for doubt as to the clearness of the passage in Num. xxvii. If we find no mention anywhere of Joshua's having inquired by Urim, the foundation of this fact is deeply laid in his relations to Moses. He was called only to be the executor of the designs of Moses. His activity expends itself in continuing the work of Moses. It moves entirely within the lines prescribed by Moses, and is impelled by his inviolable authority. Joshua's deeds are but the historical outgrowth of the spirit of Moses. The book of Joshua is but the narrative of Joshua's obedience to the word of Moses. Whatever Joshua ordains, is rendered sacred by an appeal to Moses. Even the division of the land is conducted according to this authority (Josh. xiii. xv.). "Every place have I given you, as I said unto Moses," is the language used (Josh. i. 3). Remember what Moses commanded you, says Joshua to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh (Josh. i. 13). The fact is brought out

of Israel might obey him (Num. xxvii. 20.) With the death of Moses the work of legislation is closed.

After him, Joshua exercises the authority of *government and direction*. By his deeds he gains for himself respect among the people, like that which Moses had (Josh. i. 5, i. 17, iv. 14. xvii. 4, xviii. 3); similar wonders are wrought through him: but he executes only *inherited* commands; his task demands the energy of *obedience*. Moses had always been named before Aaron (Moses and Aaron);<sup>1</sup> but when Joshua and the Priest were named together, Eleazar stood first. (Thus, Num. xxxiv. 17; Josh. xiv. 1, xvii. 4, xix. 51, xxi. 1). When Moses lived, the priesthood received their commands through him; after his death, Joshua received support and aid through the Priest (Num. xxvii. 21). In accordance with this, we must understand what is said, Josh. i. 1, namely, that "the Lord spake unto Joshua." For henceforth "there arose not a prophet like unto Moses." That which Moses was, could not repeat itself in any other person. Joshua, therefore, was only the reflection of a part of the power of Moses; but as such he had conducted the first historical act of fulfillment demanded by the Mosaic law. The conquest of Canaan was the necessary presupposition of the Mosaic system. Israel, having been liberated, received a national homestead. When Joshua died, the division of the land among the tribes was completed. With the death of Moses

with peculiar emphasis in the following passages: "Be strong and very courageous to do according to all the laws which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or the left" (Josh. i. 7). "There was not a word of all that Moses commanded which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel" (Josh. viii. 35). "As the Lord commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua: he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses" (Josh. xi. 15).

Wherever, therefore, Joshua simply executes the will of God as expressed in the commands of Moses, the necessity for inquiring by Urim does not arise. It is precisely in the execution of the Mosaic commands that God speaks to Joshua, as Josh. iv. 10 clearly teaches: "until everything was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua to speak, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua." The direct command of God to Moses operates on Joshua who executes it.

That Joshua is the executor of the commands of Moses, cannot consistently with the spirit of the book which relates his history, be overlooked. When, however, the decision by Urim is alluded to, and it is said, "according to his mouth" ( $\text{פִּי}$ ), the reference is to the same (priestly) mouth which, Josh. xix. 50, assigns an inheritance to Joshua, "according to the mouth of Jehovah" ( $\text{פִּי יְהוָה}$ ).

This method of decision comes into play when Joshua has no instructions from Moses according to which to act. The peculiar position of Joshua, by whom, through the word of Moses, God still always speaks and acts as through Moses (Josh. iii. 7), and who nevertheless does not like Moses stand before, but after, the priest, becomes everywhere manifest. This position also is unique, and never again recurs. It is therefore at his death, and not till then, that the preponderance of the Priest as the sole possessor of the word of God, becomes fully manifest. The fact, therefore, that we now first hear of an "asking of the Lord," so far from being obscure, is full of instruction on the historical position of affairs.

the spirit revealed in the law enters upon its course through the history of the world. With the departure of Joshua, the national development of Israel in Canaan commences. The position of Moses was unique, and like that of a father, could not be refilled. When he dies, the heir assumes the house and its management. This heir was not Joshua, but the people itself. Joshua was only a temporary continuator of the Mosaic authority, specially charged with the seizure of the land. He was but the executive arm of Moses for the conquest (מִשְׁרָרָה, "minister," Josh. i. 1). His personality is inseparable from that of Moses. As Elijah's spirit does not wholly depart from the nation until Elisha's death, so the personal conduct and guidance of the people by Moses do not entirely cease until the death of Joshua. Joshua's activity is just as unique as that of his teacher. He is no lawgiver, but neither is he a king or judge, as were others who came after him. He is the servant of Jehovah, inasmuch as he is the minister of Moses. The correspondence between Judg. i. 1 and Josh. i. 1, is therefore a very profound one. The death of the men, which these verses respectively record, gave rise to the occurrences that follow.

The sons of Israel asked Jehovah. Literally: "And it came to pass . . . and the sons of Israel asked," etc. The first "and" (ו) introduces the cause,<sup>1</sup> the second the consequence. It is moreover intimated that the consequence is speedy in coming, follows its cause without any interval. The translation might have been: "And it came to pass . . . that the sons of Israel immediately asked;" or, "Scarcely had Joshua died, when the sons of Israel," etc. It lies in the nature of the Hebrew copula, that when it introduces a consequence, it also marks it as closely connected with its antecedent in point of time. The Greeks and Romans made similar use of *καὶ* and *et*. Cf. the line of Virgil (*Æneid*, iii. 9): *It'x prima inceperat astas, et pater Anchises dare fatis vela jubebat*. The Hebrew idiom has also passed over into the Greek of the New Testament, cf. Luke ii. 21; *καὶ ὅτε ἐπλήθυνσαν ἡμέραι ὀκτὼ . . . καὶ ἐκλήθη, etc.*: "and the child was eight days old, when forthwith it was named Jesus," where the Gothic version likewise retains the double *yh*, "and." This brings out the more definite sense, both in the parallel passage, Josh. i. 1, and here. Scarcely had Moses died, is the idea there, when God spake to Joshua. The government of Israel was not for a moment to be interrupted. Scarcely was Joshua dead, when the sons of Israel asked Jehovah. As Joshua succeeded Moses in the chief direction of affairs, so the congregation of the children of Israel succeeded Joshua. The representatives of this congregation, as appears from Josh. xxiv. 31 and Judg. ii. 7, are the Elders (זְקֵנִים). Jewish tradition, accordingly, makes the spiritual doctrine pass from Moses to Joshua, and from Joshua to the Elders. These El-

ders are the seventy men chosen by Moses (Num. xi. 16) to assist him in bearing the burden of the people. The term "Elder," it is true, is applied to every authority among the people, especially civil. "Elders," as representatives of the people, are witnesses of the wonders of God in the desert (Ex. xvii. 5). The "Elders" are judges" (Deut. xxii. 16); the civil authorities of each city are "Elders" (Deut. xxv. 7). "Seventy of the Elders," with Moses and the priests, behold the glory of God (Ex. xxiv. 1, *seq.*). The שֹׁטְרִים, *shoterim*, officers charged with executive and police duties, become "Elders" as soon as they execute the regulations of Moses among the people (Ex. xii. 21). The seventy Elders who assisted Moses in bearing the burden that pressed upon him must, therefore, be distinguished from the authorities of the several tribes and cities. They represent the whole nation. As such, they unite with Moses, at the close of his career, in commanding the people to keep the law, and after passing the Jordan to erect a memorial of great stones (Deut. xxvii. 1, 2). During the regency of Joshua, the authorities and representatives of the people, beside the priests and Levites, consist of Elders, heads of tribes, judges, and magistrates (*shoterim*). Such is the enumeration after the conquest of Ai, and particularly in Josh. xxiii. 2, where, in order to give his last instructions to Israel, Joshua calls all the representatives of the people together. Again, in ch. xxiv. 1, it is stated that Joshua "called for the Elders of Israel, and for their heads, judges, and magistrates." If no distinction were intended here, it had been sufficient to say, "elders and heads;" for judges and magistrates were also "elders." But he called together the national representatives and those of the several tribes, like two "Houses" or "Chambers." The tribal representatives and authorities he dismisses; but the "Elders," who belong to all the tribes in common, remain near him, as they had been near Moses. These, therefore are they who, when Joshua dies, step into his place. As on him, so on them, there had been put of the spirit that was on Moses (Num. xi. 17). They quickly and zealously undertake the government. They determine to begin at once where Joshua stopped, to make war on the nations who have not yet been conquered, though their lands have been assigned to the several tribes (Josh. xxiii. 4). Joshua is scarcely dead, before the Elders inquire of God.<sup>3</sup>

No father ever cared for his children as Moses, under divine direction, cared for his people. Who, then, when he is gone, shall determine what the people are or are not to undertake? The answer to this question is recorded Num. xxvii. 21: After the death of Moses, Joshua is to stand before Eleazar the priest, inquire of him after the judgment of Urim from Jehovah, and according to his answer they shall go out and come in. That Joshua ever did this, the book which bears his name nowhere records. It is characteristic of his exceptional position, as bound by the word and directions of Moses,

of Jewish tradition that there were in every city seven judges, each with two Levitical assistants, corresponding to the seventy-two of the general senate.

3 [BACHMANN: "The sons of Israel here are not the whole nation, but only the tribes west of the Jordan, who are spoken of in the same way, and in express contradiction from the tribes east of the Jordan, in Josh. xxii. 12, 13, 32. According to Josh. xiii. and xxiii. the further conflict with the Canaanites was incumbent on the western, not on the eastern tribes. Hence, also, the following account treats only of the doings and omissions of the western Israel." — Ta]

1 [BERTHEAU: "וְיָ", in conjunction with the words, 'after the death of Joshua,' first connects itself with the closing narrative of the Book of Joshua (xxiv. 29-33), and secondly designates the Book of Judges as a link in the chain of books which relate, in unbroken connection, the [sacred] history of the world, from the creation to the exile of the inhabitants of the southern kingdom. The several books which contain this connected historical account are joined together by the connective וְ, — Tr.]

2 Cf. Josephus, *Ant. iv.* 8, 14, who states on the authority

that the word of God comes directly to him, although he ranks after Eleazar the priest. But this is not the position of the congregation of Israel; and hence the provision made by Moses for Joshua now formally becomes of force. For the first time since Num. xxvii. 21, we find here the word **שָׁאַל**

with **בְּ**, in the signification "to inquire of Jehovah;" for the **שָׁאַל בְּאֵלֵיהֶם** of that passage and the **שָׁאַל בִּיהוָה** of this are equivalent expressions. Inquiries put to the Urim and Thummim were answered by none but God. In the sublime organism of the Mosaic law every internal thought, every spiritual truth, presents itself in the form of an external action, a visible symbol. Urim and Thummim (Light and Purity) lie in the breast-plate on the heart of the priest, when he enters into the sanctuary (Ex. xxviii. 30). They lie on the heart; but that which is inquired after, receives its solution from the Spirit of God in the heart of the priest. Consequently, although in the *locus classicus* (Num. xxvii. 21), the expression is, "to inquire of the Urim," here and elsewhere in the Book of Judges it is always, "and they inquired of Jehovah." The Greeks also used the expression *ἐρωτᾷν τὸν θεόν* for "inquiring of the oracle," cf. Xenoph., *Mem.*, viii. 3). The Urim also were an oracle, and a priest announced the word of God. The God of Israel, however, does not speak in riddles (Num. xii. 8), but in clear and definite responses. Israel asks: —

Who of us<sup>1</sup> shall first go up against the Canaanite to fight against him? The word "go up" is not to be taken altogether literally. The Hebrew **עָלָה**, here and frequently answers in signification to the Greek *ἐφορμᾶν*, Latin *aggredi*. It means to advance to the attack, but conceives the defense as made from a higher level. The point and justification of the inquiry lies in the word "first." The question is not whether aggressive measures shall or shall not be adopted, but which of the tribes shall initiate them. Hitherto, Moses, and after him, Joshua have directed the movements of the people. Under Joshua, moreover, all the tribes united in common warfare. All for one, each for all. The general war is at an end; the land is divided, the tribes have had their territories assigned them. Now each single tribe must engage the enemies still settled within its borders. This was another, very difficult task. It was a test of the strength and moral endurance of the several tribes. The general war of conquest under Joshua did not come into collision with the joy of possession and rest, for these had as yet no existence. But after the dispersion of the tribes such a common war, under one leadership, was no longer practicable. It may also have appeared unwise that all the tribes should be engaged in general and simultaneous action within their several territories. Had one tribe been defeated, the others would not have been in a position to assist it. The question therefore concerned the honor and duty of the first at-

tack. As yet no tribe held any definite priority of rank. For the sake of peace and right, it was left with God to determine who should first go up to fight against the inhabitants of the land, to *grind* them, as the word used expresses it, and thus deprive them of that power for evil which as nations they possessed. The signification "to war" of **לָחֵם**, is illustrated by the meaning "to eat," which it also has. The terrible work of war is like the action of the teeth on bread, it tears and grinds its object. Hence the Greek *μάχαιρα*, knife, belongs to *μάχονται*, to fight, just as the Hebrew **רָחַץ לֵךְ**, knife, belongs to **לָחֵם**, to eat.

Ver. 2. And Jehovah said, Judah shall go up. Judah takes a prominent position among the sons of Jacob, even in the lifetime of their father. The misdemeanors of his elder brethren favor this. It is he who saves Joseph from the pit in which the wrath of the others designed him to perish; and who, by suggesting his sale into Egypt, paves the way for the wonderful destinies which that land has in store for Israel. He is capable of confessing his sins (Gen. xxxviii. 26). He pledges himself to Jacob for the safe return of Benjamin, and him the patriarch trusts. He, also, in the hour of peril, speaks the decisive word to the yet unrecognized Joseph (Gen. xlv. 18); and, although he bows himself before Joseph, the blessing of Jacob nevertheless says of him (Gen. xlix. 8 ff.): "Thy brethren praise thee; the sceptre shall not depart from Judah." The tribe of Judah holds the same prominent position. It is the most numerous tribe. At the first census (Num. ii. 1), its military strength is greater than that of both the tribes of Joseph. In the desert, it leads the first of the four encampments, — that, namely, which faces the east (Num. ii. 3).<sup>2</sup> It began the decaupment and advance (Num. x. 14). Among those appointed by Moses to allot the land, the representative of Judah is named first (Num. xxxiv. 19); and hence when the allotment was actually made under Joshua, the lot of Judah came out first (Josh. xv. 1).

But the tribe of Judah had yet other merits, by reason of which it took the initiative on the present occasion. When Moses sent twelve men to reconnoitre the land, one man from each tribe, the messengers of Judah and Ephraim alone, full of faith and courage, sought to awaken within the people a spirit pleasing to God. The messenger of Ephraim was Joshua, the son of Nun, the minister of Moses; the representative of Judah was Caleb. Both obtained great credit for their conduct. Joshua became the successor of Moses. When Joshua died, Caleb still lived. The great respect which he enjoyed, as head of the tribe of Judah, and on account of the approbation of Moses, may also be inferred from Josh. xiv. 6.<sup>3</sup>

Up then! I have delivered the land into his hand. "Up then," the address of encouragement: *agite, macte!*<sup>4</sup> Judah may boldly attack — victory is certain. Caleb stands at the head of the tribe.

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. on this rendering the note under the text on p. 23. — Ta.]

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ps. cxiv. 2, and the *Psikta* and *Jalkut* on the Book of Judges (21. Amsterd.) § 37, p. 2, ch. viii.

<sup>3</sup> The history of Athens contains a similar instance. The council of war before the battle of Marathon was presided over by Callimachus, of the tribe Ajax. A preponderance of voices, exaggerating the danger, already inclined to avoid the Persian army, when Callimachus voted for the course urged by Miltiades, and turned the tide. In consequence of this, the tribe of Ajax was specially honored. Notwithstand-

ing the use of the lot, the last place in the chorus was never assigned to this tribe (Plutarch, *Qu. Symp.*, i. 10; cf. Böckh, *Staatshaushalt der Athener*, i. 743, note). It is said that Charlemagne, induced by the heroic deeds of Count Gerold, bestowed on the Swabians the right of forming the vanguard in every campaign of the empire.

<sup>4</sup> [Occasionally **הָלַךְ** may be properly rendered by "Up!" or "Now then!" cf. Ps. cxxxiv. 1, where it is followed by an imperative; but in situations like the present such a rendering is unnecessarily free. The word is designed

He has already been assured of victory by Moses (Num. xiv. 24; Josh. xiv. 9). Josephus (*Ant.* v. 2, 1) calls the priest who officiates Phinehas. He infers this from Josh. xxiv. 33, where the death of Eleazar is recorded. According to Jewish tradition, Phinehas also wrote the conclusion of the Book of Joshua.

## HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Ver. 1. Israel is believing and obedient after the death of Joshua. Like a child after the death of its father, it has the best intentions. It is zealous to perform, with speed and vigor, the task imposed by Joshua. As directed by the law (Num. xxvii. 21), it inquires of God through His priest, the appointed medium for announcing His will. The recollection of benefits received from the departed hero, and the feelings of piety toward him, are still exerting their influence. So does many a child finish the period of instruction preparatory to confirmation, with a heart zealously resolved to be pious. Many a Christian comes away from an awakening sermon with resolutions of repentance. *Principium ferret.* First love is full of glowing zeal. To begin well is never without a blessing. The best inheritance is to continue obedient toward God.

STARKE: God gives more than we seek from him. — GERLACH: Not even the task which had been imposed on each individual tribe, will they take in hand, without having inquired of the Lord concerning it.

Ver. 2. God therefore vouchsafes direction and promise. Judah is to go before. When Israel is believing and obedient, Judah always goes before (Gen. xlix. 10): in the desert, at the head of the host; after the time of the Judges, when David sits upon the throne of Israel; and finally, when

to excite the attention and put it on the alert for what is coming. Of course, the assurance which here follows it, would animate and incite; but the *agite! macte!* are in the

the Lion of the tribe of Judah conquers the last enemy, which is death.

STARKE: If we also desire to war against our spiritual Canaanites, the first attack must be made and the war must be conducted, by Christ Jesus, the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. v. 5).

LISCO: The words, "I have delivered the land," are meant prophetically; with God that which is certain in the future is as if it were present.

[BUSH (combining Scott and Henry): The precedence was given to Judah because it was the most numerous, powerful, and valiant of all the tribes, and that which the Lord designed should possess the preëminence in all respects, as being the one from which the Messiah was to spring, and for that reason crowned with the "excellency of dignity" above all its fellows. Judah therefore must lead in this perilous enterprise; for God not only appoints service according to the strength and ability He has given, but "would also have the burden of honor and the burden of labor go together." Those who have the precedence in rank, reputation, or influence, should always be disposed to go before others in every good work, undismayed by danger, difficulty, or obloquy, that they may encourage others by their example.]

WORDSWORTH: The death of Joshua is the date of degeneracy. So in spiritual respects, as long as the true Joshua lives in the soul, there is health. St. Paul says, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." The true Joshua lives in the souls of his saints; but if He dies in the soul, that death is theirs; the death of their souls (*Origen*).

BACHMANN: As the Book of Joshua opens with the mention of Moses' death, so the Book of Judges with that of Joshua. The servants of the Lord die one after the other; but the history of his kingdom goes on uninterruptedly. — TR.]

words to which יהוה calls attention, not in יהוה itself. TR.]

*Judah and Simeon agree to assist each other in clearing their allotted lands of Canaanites. They defeat the enemy in Bezek, capture Adoni-bezek, and burn Jerusalem*

## CHAPTER I. 3-8.

- 3 And Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may [and let us] fight [together] against the Canaanites; and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot. So Simeon went with him. And Judah went up, and the Lord [Jehovah] delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand: and they slew [smote] of [omit: of] them in Bezek ten thousand men.<sup>1</sup> And they found [came upon, unexpectedly met with] Adoni-bezek in Bezek: and they fought against him, and they slew [smote] the Canaanites and the Perizzites. But [And] Adoni-bezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. And Adonibezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered *their meat* under my table; as I have done, so God [the Deity] hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died. (Now [Omit the ( ), and for NOW read: But] the children [sons] of Judah had fought [omitted: had<sup>2</sup>] against Jerusalem, and had taken it, and smitten it [and took it<sup>3</sup> and smote it] with the edge<sup>4</sup> of the sword, and set the city on fire [gave the city up to the fire].

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 4. — "Smote them in Bezek ten thousand men" *i. e.* to the number of 10,000 men. Cf. ch. iii. 29, 31, etc. As for the word **נָכַח**, its proper meaning is "to strike, to smite;" here, doubtless, so far as the ten thousand are concerned, to smite fatally, to kill; elsewhere (in ver. 5, for instance), to defeat, vanquish. — Tr.]

[2 Ver. 8. — MATTHEW HENRY: Our translators judge it [the taking of Jerusalem] spoken of here, as done formerly in Joshua's time, and only repeated [related] on occasion of Adoni-bezek's dying there, and therefore read it, "they had fought against Jerusalem," and put this verse in a parenthesis; but the original speaks of it as a thing *now* done; and that seems most probable, because it is said to be done by the children of Judah in particular, not by all Israel in general, whom Joshua commanded. — Tr.]

[3 Ver. 8. — To fight against a city, **הִלָּחֵם בָּהּ**, is to besiege it, or assault it by storm, cf. Josh. x. 31; 2 Sam. xii. 25. **לְכָדָהּ** is to take by such a movement. Hence Dr. Cassel translates, "fought against Jerusalem, and took it by storm, *erstürmten es.*" — Tr.]

[4 Ver. 8. — **לְפִי חֶרֶב**: lit. "according to the mouth (*i. e.* edge) of the sword. The expression denotes usurping destruction, a killing whose only measure is the sharpness of the sword's edge. Cf. Bertheau *in loc.*" — Tr.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 3. And Judah said unto Simeon his brother. In matters of war the tribes were repre-

sented by the *Nesi'im* (**נְסִיִּים**). A *Nasi*, prince or chief, stood at the head of each tribe, and acted in its name, although with great independence. At the numbering of the people in the desert, the *Nasi* of Judah was Nahshon, the son of Aminadab; but after the sending of the spies, Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, held that position (Num. xxxiv. 19). According to the directions of Moses in the passage just referred to, these princes were to assist the Priest and Joshua in the allotment of the land to the tribes. They are the same who, in Josh. xix. 51, are called "heads of families." For, as appears especially from Josh. xxii. 14, only he could be *Nasi* who was "head of a family." Collectively, they are styled "the princes of the congregation" (Josh. xxii. 30). That Moses names only ten (Num. xxxiv. 18, etc.), arises from the fact that he refers only to the allotment of the land this side the Jordan. The princes of the two and a half tribes beyond the Jordan had nothing to do with this. When the trans-Jordanic tribes were erroneously suspected of apostasy, the ten princes with the priest went to them as an embassy from the other tribes (Josh. xxii. 14). It was these princes who ratified the treaty with the Gibeonites (Josh. ix. 15); and the congregation was bound by their oath, although greatly dissatisfied when the deception of the Gibeonites was discovered.

Come up with me into my lot. The territory of a single tribe was called its lot, **נַחֲלָה**. Compare the Greek *κληρος*, used to denote possessions in general, and also the portion of territory assigned to each party embarked in a colonial enterprise. ("Cresus devastated the lots of the Syrians," *φθείρων τοὺς κλήρους*, Herod. i. 76.) — It was natural for Judah to summon his brother Simeon to join him; for Simeon's territory lay within the borders of Judah.<sup>1</sup> According to the statements of Josh. xv., the inheritance assigned to the tribe of Judah might be bounded by two lines, drawn respectively from the northern and southern extremities of the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean, the northern line passing below Jerusalem. Simeon's part lay in the middle between these lines, toward the west. For this reason, Simeon is already in Num. xxxiv. 20 named second, next to

Judah, the first tribe. This summons of Judah to Simeon to conquer together their territories is instructive in several respects. It shows that the whole south had indeed been attacked, but was not yet occupied. True, the narrative of the conquest of Canaan by Joshua is not complete, and leaves much to be supplied; but thus much is clear, that though Joshua undoubtedly made war on the southern and northern Canaanites, he by no means obtained control of all the land. It is also evident from Josh. i.-x. 42, that as long as Joshua fought with the more southern enemies, his encampment was at Gilgal, in the neighborhood of Jericho and the Jordan, to which after each victory over the southern kings, whom he pursued far into the southwest, he always fell back (Josh. x. 15, 43). Hence the conversation with Caleb, concerning the inheritance of the latter takes place while the camp is still at Gilgal (Josh. xiv. 6). Consequently, it can only have been the result of victories over the northern princes, that Joshua, in the last years of his regency, transferred the encampment of the people to Shiloh (Josh. xviii. 1, xxi. 2) and Shechem (Josh. xxiv. 1). Of this territory he had already gained permanent possession. It belonged to the inheritance of the tribe of Ephraim. Joshua himself was of this tribe. That fact explains how it was that Ephraim was the first to come into secure and permanent territorial possession. In this also Joshua differs from Moses. The latter, although sprung from the tribe of Levi, belonged to all the tribes. He was raised above every special tribe-relationship. His grave even none can boast of. Joshua does not deny that he belongs to Joseph, although he does not yield to their less righteous demands (Josh. xvii. 14). His tribe forms the first circle around him. When he locates the national centre in Shiloh and Shechem, it is in the possessions of Ephraim. Here, as long as Joshua lived, the government of the Israelitish tribes and their sanctuary had their seat. Here the bones of Joseph were buried; here are the sepulchres of Joshua and his contemporary, the priest Eleazar. Ephraim was the point from which the farther warlike expeditions of the individual tribes were directed. Precisely because the first permanently held possession had connected itself with Joshua and his tribe, the summons to seize and occupy their assigned territory came next to Judah and its prince Caleb, the associate of Joshua, and after him the first man of Israel. But Judah and lay within that of Judah (Josh. xix. 1 ff.), on account of which Simeon's connection with Judah was closer than that of the other tribes. — Tr.]

<sup>1</sup> [KEL: Simeon is called the "brother" of Judah, not so much because they both descended from one mother, Leah (Gen. xxix. 23, 35), as because Simeon's inheritance

Simeon cannot have set out on their expedition from Shiloh or Shechem. There was not room enough in the territory of the tribe of Ephraim to afford camping-ground for all Israel. The encampment in Gilgal had not ceased; and there the tribe of Judah found a suitable station whence to gain possession of its own land. Thence they could enter immediately into the territory assigned them. Moreover, it is only upon the supposition that Gilgal was the point of departure of the army of Judah, that it becomes entirely clear why Judah turned to his brother Simeon. Had he come down from Shechem, he might also have turned to Benjamin. But Simeon needed the same avenue into his dominions as Judah. He must pass through the country of the latter to reach his own. From Gilgal, the armies of Judah advanced along the boundary line between their own land and Benjamin, in the direction of the western shore of the Dead Sea which formed their eastern border (Josh. xv. 5-7), intending to march through the wilderness, and perhaps after passing Tekoah, to turn first against Hebron. There the enemy met them.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 4. **And they smote them in Bezek, ten thousand men.** The position of Bezek is indicated by the direction of Judah's advance. It must have been already within the limits of Judah; for "Judah went up," namely, to his territory. Its distance from Jerusalem cannot have been great, for they brought the wounded and maimed Adoni-bezek thither, and immediately after the battle in Bezek the tribes attack Jerusalem. If it were the name of a city, the place bearing it would seem to have been of such importance, as to make it matter of surprise that we find no further mention of it.<sup>2</sup> The name announces itself as an appellative derived from the character of the region. **בֶּזֶק** (Bezek) is undoubtedly

equivalent to **בָּרָק** (Barak). It designates unfruitful, stony sand-areas (*Syrtes*). The desert Barca in North Africa is familiar in ancient and modern times. The inhabitants of deserts received the name Barcæans, as Jerome remarks (*Ep. exxix.*), "from the city Barca, which lies in the desert." At the present day a chasm in the rocks, in the peninsula of Sinai, bears the name *Bereika* (Ritter, xiv. 547). The ancient name Bene-berak (Josh. xix. 45) also explains itself in this way. In Arabic **بركة** designates stony, unfruitful land. Now, the land west of the Dead Sea, through which Judah marched into his territory, is for the most part of this character. "The desert here, covered with chalk and crumbling limestone, and without the least trace of vegetation, has a truly terrible appearance" (Ritter,

1 [That Judah, nor in fact any of the western tribes, except Ephraim, had not hitherto enjoyed actual possession of any part of his land, is also the view of Bertheau and Ewald. It is strenuously objected to by Bachmann, who maintains that "not only the allotment of the land among the tribes, but also its actual occupation by them, are constantly presupposed in all that this first chapter relates both about the prosecution of the local wars, and the many instances of sinful failure to prosecute them." And, certainly, such passages as Josh. xxiii. 1 and xxiv. 28, cf. Judg. ii. 6, appear at least to be decidedly against the view taken by our author. The subject, however, is obscure and intricate, and not to be entered upon in a foot-note. — Tr.]

2 The name does indeed occur again in 1 Sam. xi. 8, where Saul numbers Israel in Bezek. But the very fact that Bezek is there used as a place for mustering troops, shows that it is open country, not any thickly peopled spot. It cannot be maintained that both Bezecks must designate the same region. Similar topographical conditions conferred similar or

xv. 653 (Gage's Transl. iii. 114). It was in this tract that the battle was joined, which ended in the defeat of the Canaanite and Perizzite. The name Canaanites passed over from the cities of the Phœnician Lowlands (Canaan), to the inhabitants of cities throughout the land. It designates the population devoted to agriculture and the arts of civilized life. Perizzites may have been the name of tribes of Bedonins, inhabitants of tents, roving as will among the mountains and in the desert. Down to the present time, the eastern part of Judah, adjoining the Dead Sea, is a true Bedouin highway, especially for all those Arabs who press forward from the east and south. The Canaanites and Perizzites unite to meet the common enemy in the desert tract, just as Zenobia united herself with the Saracens of the desert against the Romans. They are defeated, and there fall ten thousand men, *i. e.* **μύριοι**, myriads, an indefinitely large number. From the fact that Bezek does not designate a particular place, but the region in general, it becomes plain that verses 4 and 5 do not relate the same occurrence twice. Verse 4 speaks of the first conflict. The second was offered by Adoni-bezek (ver. 5).

Ver. 5. **And they came upon Adoni-bezek in Bezek.** We can trace the way which Judah took, with Simeon, to the borders assigned him. From Gilgal it proceeded to Beth-hogla (*Abn Hagla*), through the wide northern plain of the Dead Sea, on its northwestern shore, to the region at present traversed by the Ta'âmirah Bedouin tribes. This region was named Bezek. **בֶּזֶק** and **בָּרָק**<sup>3</sup> primarily signify "dazzling brightness," hence the signification "lightning." It was doubtless the dazzling glare of the ground, produced by the reflection of the sun whether from the white salt-crust of the surface, the rocks,<sup>4</sup> or the undulating sandhills, that suggested the name Bezek for such regions. This primary sense enables us, moreover, also to discover the connection between Adoni-bezek and Bezek. That the latter is not a city, might have been sufficiently inferred from the fact that notwithstanding the victory no record is made here, as in the cases of other cities, of its fall and destruction. To take Adoni-bezek as Prince of Bezek, does not seem advisable. The proper names of heathen kings always have reference to their religion.<sup>5</sup> Since Adoni-bezek, after having been mutilated, was carried by his attendants to Jerusalem, he must have held some relation to that city. Only that supposition enables us to see why Judah and Simeon storm Jebus (Jerusalem), belonging as it did to the tribe of Benjamin, for which reason they make no attempt to hold it by garrisoning it. Already in the 10th chapter of Joshua we meet with identical names. Bene-berak [sons of Berak, Josh. xix. 45, as to the origin and significance of the name compare the commentary on vers. 4 and 5. — Tr.] was in the tribe of Dan. And so a region west of the Jordan, and east of Shechem, so far at least as we can determine the true direction from the narrative [in Sam. xi. 8], seems also to have borne the name Bezek.

3 According to the interchange of *r* and *s* as in **תִּזְוִן** and **תִּזְוִן** (Ezek. i. 14), *quaero* and *quæso*, etc. In Ezek. i. 14 *bezek* (*bazak*) denotes a dazzling radiance. Barak, lightning, became a proper name. In the regions of Barca (the desert) the name Barcas (Hamilcar) was familiar enough.

4 "The glitter of the (gravel) surface in the sunshine, is not a little trying to the eyes." — Strauss, *Sinai und Golgotha*, iii. 1, 133.

5 Cf. my *Ortsnamen* (Erfurt, 1856), i. 118.



Adoni-zedek in Jerusalem, just as in the history of Abraham Melchi-zedek appears there. *Adon* is a Phœnician designation of the Deity. Adoni-zedek and Melchi-zedek mean, "My God, my king, is Zedek." The names of the kings enunciated their creeds. Zedek (*Sadyk, Sydyk*) belongs to the star-worship of the Canaanites, and according to ancient tradition was the name of the planet Jupiter. Adoni-bezek manifestly expresses a similar idea. Bezek = Barak is the dazzling brightness, which is also peculiar to Jupiter. His Sanskrit name is "*Brahmaspati (Brihaspati)*," Father of Brightness. "*My God is Brightness*," is the creed contained in the name Adoni-bezek. His name alone might lead us to consider him King of Jerusalem, to which, as if it were his royal residence, his *own attendants* carry him after his defeat.<sup>2</sup>

Ver. 6. And Adoni-bezek fled, . . . and they cut off the thumbs of his hands and feet, etc. How horrible is the history of human cruelty! It is the mark of ungodliness, that it glories in the agony of him whom it calls an enemy. The mutilation of the human body is the tyranny of sin over the work of God, which it nevertheless fears. The Persian king Artaxerxes caused the arm of his brother, which had bent the bow against him, to be hewn off, even after death. Thumbs were cut off to incapacitate the hand for using the bow, great toes to render the gait uncertain. When in 456 B. C., the inhabitants of Ægina were conquered by the Athenians, the victors ordered their right thumbs to be cut off, so that, while still able to handle the oar, they might be incapable of using the spear (*Ælian, Var. Hist.*, ii. 9). Mohammed (*Sura*, viii. 12) gave orders to punish the enemies of Islam by cutting off their heads and the ends of their fingers, and blames its omission in the battle of Beder. In the German *Waldweisthum* the penalty against hunters and poachers of having their thumbs cut off, is of frequent occurrence (*Grimm, Rechtsalterth.*, 707; *Deutsches Wörterb.* ii. 346).<sup>3</sup> Adoni-bezek, in his pride, enjoyed the horrible satisfaction of making the mutilated wretches pick up their food under his table, hungry and

whining like dogs.<sup>4</sup> Curtius relates that the Persians had preserved Greek captives, mutilated in their hands, feet, and ears, "for protracted sport" (*in longum sui ludibrium reseraverant. De Rebus Gest. Alex.*, v. 5, 6). Posidonius (*in Athenæus*, iv. 152, d.) tells how the king of the Parthians at his meals threw food to his courtier, who caught it like a dog (*τὸ παραβληθὲν κυνιστὶ σιτέται*), and was moreover beaten like a dog. The tribe of Judah simply recompensed Adoni-bezek: not from revenge, for Israel had not suffered anything from him; nor from pleasure in the misery of others, for they left him in the hands of his own people.

Ver. 7. As I have done, so has the Deity<sup>5</sup> completed unto me. Many (in round numbers, seventy) are they whom he has maltreated. **לִשְׁבַע**

(Piel of **לִשְׁבַע**) is to finish, complete, and hence to requite; for reward and punishment are inseparably connected with good and evil deeds. As the blossom reaches completion only in the fruit, so deeds in their recompense. The Greeks used *τελεῖν* in the same sense. "When the Olympian (says Homer, *Iliad*, iv. 160) does not speedily punish (*ἐρέεσσαν*), he still does it later (*ἐκ τε καὶ ὀψὶ τελεῖ*)."<sup>6</sup> It was an ethical maxim extensively accepted among ancient nations that men must suffer the same pains which they have inflicted on others. The later Greeks called this the *Neoptolemic Tisis*, from the circumstance that Neoptolemus was punished in the same way in which he had sinned (Pausanias, iv. 17, 3; Nägelsbach, *Nachhom. Theologie*, 343). He had murdered at the altar, and at the altar he was murdered. Phaleris had roasted human beings in a brazen bull—the same punishment was inflicted on himself.<sup>7</sup> That which Dionysius had done to the women of his people, his own daughters were made to undergo (*Ælian, Var. Hist.*, ix. 8). Jethro says (*Ex.* xviii. 11), "for the thing wherein they sinned, came upon them."

And they brought him to Jerusalem. None but his own people<sup>8</sup> could bring him thither, for the city was not yet taken. It was evidently his

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Böhlen, *Altes Indien*, ii. 248.

<sup>2</sup> Bezek is generally regarded as the name of a city or village. The majority of scholars (Le Clerc, Rosenmüller, Rehdorf, V. Rumer, Bachmann, etc.) look for it in the territory of Judah, but without being able to discover any traces of it, which is certainly remarkable; for, if a city, it must have been, as Dr. Cassel remarks, and as the usual interpretation of Adoni-bezek as King of Bezek implies, a place of some importance. Others, therefore (as Bertheau, Keil, Ewald, etc.), connect this Bezek with that of 1 Sam. xi. 8, and both with the following statement in the *Onomasticon*: "hodie duae villae sunt nomine Bezech, vicinae sibi, in decimo septimo lapide a Neapoli, descendantibus Scythopoli." Then to account for this northern position of the armies of Judah and Simeon, Bertheau supposes them to set out from Shechem (cf. *Josh.* xxiv. 1, etc.), and to make a detour thence to the northeast, either for the purpose of descending to the south by way of the Jordan valley, or for some other reason; while Keil, without naming any place of departure, suggests that Judah and Simeon may have been compelled, before engaging the Canaanites to their own allotments, to meet those coming down upon them from the north, whom after defeating, they then pursued as far as Bezek. Dr. Cassel's explanation is attractive as well as ingenious; but, to say nothing about the uncertainty of its etymology, Bezek, as an appellative applied to a definite region, would, as Bachmann remarks,

require the article, cf. **הַכֶּכֶר, הַיְצִיָּה, הַיָּב**. — Tr.]

<sup>3</sup> Hence, on the other hand, the severe punishment which the ancient popular laws adjudged to him who unjustly cuts off another's thumb. The fine was almost as high as for he whose hand. The Salic law rated the hand at 2,500, the

thumb of hand or foot at 2,000 denarii, "qui faciunt solidos quinquaginta" (*Lex Salica*, xxix. 3, ed. Merkel, p. 16).

<sup>4</sup> [Kitto (*Daily Bible Illustrations*: *Moses and the Judges*, p. 299): "This helps us to some insight of the state of the country under the native princes, whom the Israelites were commissioned to expel. Conceive what must have been the state of the people among whom such a scene could exist, — what wars had been waged, what cruel ravages committed, before these seventy kings — however small their territories — became reduced to this condition; and behold in this a specimen of the fashion in which war was conducted, and of the treatment to which the conquered were exposed. Those are certainly very much in the wrong who picture to themselves the Canaanites as 'a happy family,' disturbed in their peaceful homes by the Hebrew barbarians from the wilderness. Behold how happy, behold how peaceful, they were!" — Tr.]

<sup>5</sup> *Elohim*, which is also used of the heathen deity. The speaker speaks in the spirit of heathenism. As regards the seventy kings, it needs no argument to show that **מֶלֶךְ** like the Greek *τύραννος*, is applied to any ruler, even of a single city. Josephus (*Ant.*, v. 2, 2) read seventy-two, which especially in his time, was interchangeable as a round number with seventy.

<sup>6</sup> In the *Gesta Romanorum*, ch. xlviii., this is still adduced as a warning, and with an allusion to the passage in Ovid, *De Arte Amandi*, l. 653 [Et Phaleris tauro violenti membra Perilli torruit. Infelix inuit auctor opus. — Tr.] it is remarked: "neque enim lex æquior ulla, quam veris artifices arte perire sua."

<sup>7</sup> Since it is Adoni-bezek who speaks in ver. 7, the word



city; for the Israelites follow after, and complete their victory by its capture. The storming of Jerusalem for its own sake could not have formed part of the plan of the tribes, since it belonged to Benjamin. They were led to it by the attack which they suffered from Adoni-bezek. Nor did they take possession of it. They only broke the power of the king thoroughly. He died miserably; his people were put to the sword; the city was consumed by fire (אֶת־בִּזְיוֹנָהּ, to abandon to the flames). Thus the wanton haughtiness of Adoni-bezek was terribly requited.

## HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Ver. 3. Believing Israel is also united Israel. Judah and Simeon go forth together, in faith, as one tribe, one heart, and one soul, to the same victory. So united are children, when in faith they return from their father's grave [cf. Hom. Hints on ch. i. 1. — Tr.]. The children of God are good brothers and sisters. They do not quarrel over the inheritance, — they enjoy it in love. Believing Israel is a sermon on unity among families, neighbors, citizens, and nations. Union arises not from without, but from within. Penitence and faith bind together. *Unio* is the name of a pearl, and pearls symbolize tears. *Ex unione lux. E luce unioes.*

STARKE: As all Christians in general, so brothers and sisters in particular, should maintain a good understanding, and live together in peace and unity.

[HENRY: It becomes Israelites to help one another against Canaanites; and all Christians, even those of different tribes, to strengthen one another's hands against the common interests of Satan's kingdom. Those who thus help one another in love, have reason to hope that God will help them both.

BACHMANN: It is not incompatible with the obedience of faith, that Judah makes use of the helps placed by God at his disposal; and it is in accordance with the dictates of fraternal love that he makes *that* tribe the companion of his undertaking whose lot it was made rather to attach itself to others than to equal their independence (cf. Gen.

וְיִשְׂרָאֵל in the same verse cannot refer to the Israelites. Why should they carry him with them? It would indicate the gratification of gratuitous cruelty, a thing inconceivable in this connection. Those who save him are his own servants; but arrived at Jerusalem he dies. Verse 8, there-

xlix. 7, and also the silence of Deut. xxxiii. concerning Simeon), and whose interests were peculiarly closely connected with his own. — Tr.]

Vers. 4-8. STARKE: In the lives of men, things are often wonderfully changed about, and not by accident, but by the wonderful governance of God (Gen. i. 19).

THE SAME: God requites every one according to his deeds. Wherein one sins, therein he is also punished, — evidence that there is a God, and that He is just, recompensing according to deserts.

[SCOTT: Men often read their crimes in their punishments; and at last every mouth shall be stopped, and all sinners be constrained to admit the justice of God in their extremest miseries. Happy they who justify Him in their temporal afflictions, plead guilty before his mercy-seat, and by repentance and faith seek deliverance from the wrath to come.

JOSEPH MEDE († 1638): As I have done so God hath requited me: 1. God punisheth sin with temporal punishment in this life as well as with eternal in the life to come. 2. God doth not always presently inflict his judgments while the sin is fresh, but sometimes defers that long which He means to give home at the last. 3. These divine judgments by some conformity or affinity do carry in them as it were a stamp and print of the sin for which they are inflicted. 4. The profit and pleasure which men aim at when they commit sin will not so much as quit cost even in this life.

WORDSWORTH: As by this specimen at the beginning of this book, showing what *two tribes* of Israel could do by faith and obedience against Adoni-bezek, who had subdued and enslaved *seventy kings*, God showed what the *twelve tribes* might have done, if they had believed and obeyed him; and that all their subsequent miseries were due to defection from God; — in like manner, also, in the Christian Church, if men had followed the examples of the Apostles, — the Judahs and Simeons of the first ages, — and gone forth in their spirit of faith and love against the powers of darkness, they might long since have evangelized the world. All the distresses of Christendom are ascribable to desertions of [from] Christ, and not to any imperfection (as some have alleged) in Christianity (cf. Bp. Butler, *Analogy*, Part ii. ch. 1). — Tr.]

fore, commences very properly, not with the mere verb וַיִּלָּחֶם, but with a repetition of the grammatical subject: וַיְהִי וַיִּלָּחֶם.

*The sons of Judah smite the Anakim and take Hebron.*

## CHAPTER I. 9, 10

- 9 And afterward [Hereupon] the children [sons] of Judah went down [proceeded] to fight against the Canaanites that dwelt in the mountain [mountains], and in the south.  
10 and in the valley [i.e. depression, low country]. And Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron: (now the name of Hebron before [formerly] was Kirjath-arba [The Four Cities<sup>1</sup>];) and they slew [smote] Sheshai, and Ahiman and Talmai.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 10. This is the nearest we can come in English to Dr. Cassel's *Vierstadt*, Tetrapolis. Against the common interpretation, "City of Arba,"—Arba being taken as the name of a person,—cf. Mr. Grove in Smith's *Bib. Dict.*, s. v. Kirjath-arba. —Tr.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 9f. Hereupon the sons of Judah proceeded. They advanced, proceeded, יָרָד. While עָלָה, "ascendere," was used to express the first attack (ver. 4), the continuation of the conflict is indicated by יָרָד, "descendere," although they advance mountain-ward. Verse 9 sets forth the full extent of the task undertaken by the tribes. Before advancing into the territory allotted them, they have been obliged to resist the attack of Adonibezek at its border. They divide their work proper into the conquest of the mountains, the occupancy of the southern tract from the Dead Sea to Beersheba, and the seizure of the western lowlands. Details of these undertakings are given us only so far as they concern Caleb and his house. Hence, the conquest of Hebron is first of all related. About this ancient city,<sup>1</sup> where Abraham tarried, and the patriarchs repose in the family-vault, the recollections of the tribe of Judah concentrate themselves. It was of old the dwelling-place of valiant people. The robust vine-dressers of the valley, ages before, supported Abraham in his victorious expedition against the eastern hosts. But on the mountains there dwelt a wild and warlike race, the sons of Anak, before whom the faint-hearted spies of Moses formerly trembled. Only Caleb and Joshua were full of confidence in God. On this account, Caleb received the special assurance of Moses that he should possess the land which he had seen; and therefore at the division of the country by Joshua, he brings forward his claim to it (Josh. xiv. 12). Joshua allows it. It is no lightly-gained inheritance that Caleb asks: "Therefore give me (he says) this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day; for thou hast heard that there are Anakim there, and cities great and fenced; perhaps the Lord will be with me that I drive them out" (Josh. xiv. 12). Now, although the conquest of the city, and the expulsion of the Anakim, are already recorded in Josh. xv. 14, that is only an anticipatory historical notice in connection with the description of boundaries. The events actually occur now, in connection with the first efforts to gain permanent possession of the territory. Caleb, it is true, is old; but younger heroes surround him. They defeated the Anakim.

Ver. 10. Hebron, formerly called the Four Cities (Kirjath-arba). It is difficult to see why modern expositors<sup>2</sup> take offense at the idea that in Hebron an earlier Tetrapolis is to be recognized.

<sup>1</sup> Hebron is said to be seven years older than Zoan (Tanis) in Egypt (Num. xiii. 22). The number "seven" is here also to be regarded as a round number. It expresses the finished lapse of a long period.

<sup>2</sup> Ritter's remarks (xvi. 211 [Gage's Transl. iii. 292, seq.]), would admit of many corrections. Jerome, it is true, follows Jewish traditions (cf. *Pirke R. Eliezer*, ch. xx.) when he thinks that the *Civitas Quatuor* was so named from the patriarchs who were buried there. It is, however, none the less evident from this, that the Jews of old interpreted Kirjath-arba as meaning "Tetrapolis." Nor does Num. xiii. 22 afford the slightest occasion for doubting the truth of the statement that Kirjath-arba was the former name of Hebron. Ritter seems especially to have followed Robinson (*Bibl. Res.* 4 88).

The remark, Josh. xiv. 15: "And the name of Hebron was formerly Kirjath-arba, הַרְבֵּי עָרִים," cannot furnish the ground; for הַרְבֵּי עָרִים is here a collective term, like *gens*, as appears indubitably from Josh. xv. 13, where we have the expression, "Kirjath-arba, the father of Anak (אֲבִי הָעֵצֶק), which is Hebron." The Tetrapolis was the ancient seat of powerful tribes, whom the traditions of Israel described as giants. Similar tetrapolitan cities are elsewhere met with. The Indians had a *Katurgrāma*, the Four Villages (Lassen, *Ind. Alterth.*, i. 72). In Phrygia, Cibyra and three other places formed a Tetrapolis (Strabo, *lib.* xiii. 1, 17). I am inclined to find in the name Cibyra the same idea as in the Arabic *Cheibar*<sup>3</sup> and the Hebrew *Chebron* (Hebron), namely, that of *confederation*, community of interest. It is a suggestive fact that Abraham's expedition is joined by the *brothers* Eshcol, Aner, and Mamre (Gen. xiv. 13); concerning Mamre it is remarked, "the same is Hebron" (Gen. xxiii. 19). The Upper City (Acropolis), situated upon the mountains, and the lower cities lying in the fertile valley which these mountains inclose, together constituted the Tetrapolis. At the present day the city in the valley is still divided into three parts.<sup>4</sup> Three sons of Anak are enumerated, manifestly three tribes, probably named after ancient heroes, which tribes coalesced with the mountain city.<sup>5</sup> As late as the time of David, the phraseology is, that he dwelt in "the cities of Hebron" (2 Sam. ii. 3). Probably the name Hebron was originally given to the mountain<sup>6</sup> (the הָרַ which Caleb claims, Josh. xiv. 12), as forming the common defense, and was then after the suppression of the Anakim, transferred to the whole city. The names of the three families of Anakim do not admit of any certain interpretation. אֲחִיזָכְרִי might with most probability be interpreted after the analogy of Achijah (Ahijah or Ahiah) "Friend of God." מְנִי, מְנִי, is the heathen deity (Isa. lxx. 11), who also occurs in Phœnician inscriptions, in proper names like עבדמֶנִי, "servant of Meni." The name שֵׁשֶׁהַי, "Sheshai," reminds one of the Egyptian king שִׁשַׁק, Shishak, Sechonchis, who made war on Rehoboam (1 Kgs. xiv. 25). The name שֵׁשֶׁהַבָּזָר ("Sheshbazzar," Ezra

<sup>3</sup> Cf. my *History of the Jews*, in Ersch and Gruber's *Encyklopädie*, ii. 27, p. 166.

<sup>4</sup> Robinson, *Bibl. Res.*, ii. 74.

<sup>5</sup> In a manner analogous perhaps to the fusion of the Ramnes, Tities, and Luceres, into the one Roma of the Ramnes.

<sup>6</sup> Ritter (xvi. 228 [Gage's Transl. iii. 301]) proves that the ancient Hebron lay higher than the present, which however can refer only to a part of the city. The great importance of the place is explained by its protected situation in the mountains, along whose slopes it extended down into the valley. That fact only adapted it to be the capital of David's

kingdom. Cf. Josh. xi. 21 (הָרַ הַזֶּה).

i 8) may also be compared. The third name, Talmi, leaves it doubtful whether it is to be taken primarily as the name of a place or of a person. Stephanus Byzantinus speaks of an Arabic place which he calls Castle *Θελαμύζα*. It is possible, however, that analogous mythical ideas come into contact with each other, in the Greek legend concerning Salmones,<sup>1</sup> father of Tyro, and husband of Sidero. Hesiod already (in a Fragment, ed. Götting, p. 259) calls him an *ἄδικος καὶ ὑπέρθυμος*. Josephus (*Ant. v. 2, 3*) says that the Anakim were a race of giants, "whose bones are still shown to this very day." What stories were current about the discovery of gigantic human remains in Asia Minor and Syria, may be learned from the *Heroica* of Philostratus (ed. Jacobs, p. 28). A body of gigantic length was found in the bed of the Oron-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Heyne on *Apollodorus*, i. 9, p. 59. The later Jews write תַּלְמִי for Ptolemy Cf. Ewald, *Gesch. Israel's*, i. 309, 311.

tes. It was thought also that the bodies of Orestes and Ajax had been seen. The faint-hearted spies had depicted the Anakim as *Nephilim*, men like the prehistoric *Nibelungen* of German story; and from this Josephus constructed his giant-tale.

Josh. xv. 14 remarks, "And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak." A contradiction has been found therein with what we read here, "And they smote." None really exists. The narrative is actually more exact than is generally supposed. The statement of Josh. xv. 14 refers to Judges i. 20. The tribe of Judah had now indeed taken Hebron, and conquered the Anakim; but for peaceable possession the time had not yet come. Accompanied by Simeon, Judah proceeded onward to gain possession of the whole territory. At Judg. i. 19 the whole campaign is finished. Then they give Hebron to Caleb, and he drives out whatever remains of the Anakim. It was not with three persons, but with three tribes or nations, that they had to do.

### *Othniel takes Kirjath-sepher, and wins Achsah, the daughter of Caleb.*

#### CHAPTER I. 11-15.

- 11 And from thence he [*i. e.* Judah] went against the inhabitants of Debir: and the  
12 name of Debir before *was* Kirjath-sepher: And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kir-  
13 jath sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. And  
Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it: and he gave him Achsah  
14 his daughter to wife. And it came to pass, when she came to him [at her coming;  
*scil.* to her husband's house], that she moved [urged] him to ask of her father a [the] field:  
and she lighted from off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wilt thou [what is  
15 the matter with thee]? And she said unto him, Give me a blessing: for thou hast  
given me a south land [hast given me away into a dry land<sup>1</sup>]: give me also [therefore]  
springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs, and the nether spring.

#### TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 15. — *וְהָיָה לְאִשְׁתּוֹ* : Dr. Cassel's rendering agrees substantially with that of the LXX. and many modern critics. Bertheau says: "*וְהָיָה לְאִשְׁתּוֹ* is the accusative of place. It would be difficult to justify the other and usual rendering grammatically, since *לְ* with the accus. suffix, never, not even Jer. ix. 1, Isa. xxvii. 4, means to give anything to one." Bachmann, however, objects that "*וְהָיָה* does not occur of the giving of daughters in marriage, and that the absence of a preposition, say *לְ*, before *וְהָיָה* would make a hard construction. The suffix *וְהָיָה* is either a negligent form of popular speech, substituted for *לְ* (cf. Ewald, *Ausf. Lehrb.* 315 b), or, better, a second accus., such as is quite common with verbs of giving, favoring, etc. (cf. Ewald, 253 b), and from which rule *וְהָיָה* is not to be excepted, cf. Ezek. xxi. 32." — Tr.]

#### EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 11. And he went against Debir. The position of Debir, hitherto unknown, was recognized not long since by Dr. Rosen, on the hill-top called *Dewirbân*, near the spring *Ain Nunkur*, in a southwestern direction from Hebron, between that place and Dura (*Zeitschr. der Morgen Gesellschaft*, 1857, ii. 50-64).

The name of Debir was formerly Kirjath-sepher. In my *Ortsnamen* (i. 116, note), I already endeavored to show that Debir, Kirjath-sepher, and

Kirjath-sannah (*קִרְיַת סַנַּח*, Josh. xv. 49) philologically express one and the same idea. Fürst well remarks (*Lex. s. v. קִרְבַּי*) that "*קִרְבַּי* is the Phœnician equivalent of the Hebrew *קִרְבַּי*, a material prepared from the skins of animals, and of the Himyaritic for a book written on palm-leaves." From the latter, he says, the Greek *διφθέρα* was formed, and thus the word passed over to the Greeks and Persians. There is no reason to doubt that the name describes the city as a depository of

written traditions, book-rolls. Kirjath-sepher<sup>1</sup> was a Palestinian Hermopolis, city of 'Thoth, where literature had its seat (cf. Plutarch, *De Isid.*, ed. Parthey, p. 4; the Sept. translates, πόλις τῶν γραμμάτων). Such depositories, where the sacred writings were kept ἐν κίστῃ, in a chest (Plut. *l. c.*), for preservation, were common to the religion of the Egyptians, Phœnicians, and Babylonians. To this place, that which sheltered the sacred ark of Israel's divine law opposed itself. It was therefore of much consequence to conquer it, as on the other hand its inhabitants valiantly defended it. The different names testify of the different dialects of the tribes who have held Debir.

Ver. 12. And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher. Caleb is the chief of the tribe of Judah. Hebron has fallen to him as his inheritance, but it does not circumscribe his eager interest. "Caleb said." His personal zeal is the more prominently indicated, because displayed in a matter which involved the general cause, the honor of the whole tribe. At the conquest of Hebron, the phrase was, "and they smote;" at the next battle, fought for Debir, it is, "Caleb said." As the whole tribe assisted in gaining his personal inheritance, so for the honor of the tribe he devotes that which was wholly his, and his alone. He offers the dearest possession he has, as a prize for him who shall storm and take the strong mountain fortress and seat of idolatry. It is his only daughter (cf. 1 Chron. ii. 49) Achsah, born to him in advancing years. He can offer nothing better. Stronger proof of his zeal for the cause of Israel he cannot give. To obtain the daughter of a house by meritorious actions has in all ages been a worthy object of ambition set before young and active men. It was only by a warlike exploit that David obtained Michal who loved him. The Messenian hero Aristomenes bestows a similar reward. When a country maiden rescued him, with heroic daring, from danger involving his life, he gave her his son for a husband (Paus. iv. 19). The conquest of Debir is therefore especially mentioned to the honor of Caleb and his love for Israel. The event was a glorious incident in the hero's family history.

Ver. 13. And Othniel, the son of Kenaz, a younger brother of Caleb, took it. Israel, the nation, was divided into tribes, these into families, these into "houses," and these again into single households. This may be clearly seen from the story of Achan (Josh. vii. 14 ff.). Achan was of the tribe of Judah, the family of Zerah, the house of Zabdi, and the son of Carmi. So Caleb was the son of Jephunneh, of the house of Kenaz: whence, Num. xxxii. 12, he is called the Kenezite. Bertheau (pp. 21, 22) labors under a peculiar error, in that he confounds the family of the Kenezite in the

tribe of Judah with the hostile people of the same name mentioned Gen. xv. 19. It is true, Lengerke (*Kenan*, p. 204) and others preceded him in this; Ritter also (*Erdrkunde*, xv. 138 [Gage's Transl. ii. 146]) has allowed himself to be misled by it. But a consideration of the important relations in which Caleb stands to the people of God, would alone have authorized the presumption that he could have no connection with a people that was to be driven out before Israel. In addition to this, notice should have been taken of the isolated position of the Kenites, continuing down to a late period; for notwithstanding the peaceful conduct of this people, and their attachment to Israel, their historical derivation from the father-in-law of Moses is never forgotten. The adoption of the celebrated hero into the tribe of Judah must at all events have been explained. But there is absolutely no foundation for any such assumption as that in question. The similarity of names affords so much the less occasion, since the same names were frequently borne by heathen and Israelites, and also by families in the different tribes of Israel. One Edomite is named Kenaz, like the ancestor of Caleb; another Saul, like the king of Israel; a third Elah, like a man of Benjamin (Gen. xxxvi. 41; 1 Kgs. iv. 18). There is an alien tribe named חִתִּי but no one imagines that Israelites of the

name חִתִּי are to be reckoned to it. The name of the king of Lachish whom Joshua defeated, was Japhia, exactly like that of a son of David (2 Sam. v. 15). Hebron and Carmi, both families of Reuben, are such also in the tribe of Judah. The name Jephunneh is borne also by a man of the tribe of Asher (1 Chron. vii. 38). To this must be added that the Book of Chronicles traces the family of Caleb more in detail, and places them as relatives alongside of Nahshon, the progenitor of David (1 Chron. ii. 9 seq.). Caleb is the son of Jephunneh, of the house of Kenaz. Othniel is his brother. That the latter is not designated "son of Jephunneh," is because he is sufficiently distinguished by means of his more illustrious brother. That he is styled "son of Kenaz," is to intimate that he is full brother to the son of Jephunneh, belonging to the same stock; not, as might be, the son of Caleb's mother, by a husband from some other family. He is so much younger than Caleb, that the latter may be regarded as his second father, who had watched over him from youth up. Why we are here, where the narrative is so personal in its character, to think only of genealogical, not of physical relationships, as Bertheau supposes, it is difficult to perceive. Just here, this would destroy, not merely the historical truth, but also the æsthetic character, of the narrative.<sup>2</sup>

Ver. 14. And it came to pass at her coming,

1 Attention was again directed to the city from the fact that the first liturgical poet of the modern Jews, Kalir, designates a Kirjath-sepher as his native place. He does not, however, mean this city, but, playing on the word, he translates Καλαῖῶν in Palestine by Kirjath Shepher, i. e. Beautiful City. This opinion advanced by me in 1845 (*Frankel's Zeitschr.*) has perhaps lost none of its probability.

2 [The above view of the relationship between Caleb and Othniel is held by most modern critics. Among its opponents, however, are Ewald and De Wette. The former (*Gr. heb. Lexik.*, ii. 374) deems it "more suitable, in accordance with the view of the oldest narrator, to take Kenaz as the younger brother of Caleb;" the latter, in his excellent German Version, translates: "Othniel, der Sohn des Kenas, des ängsten Bruders Calebs." Of ancient versions, the Tar-

gum and Peshito leave the question undecided. The LXX. in C. Vat., in all three passages, and in C. Alex. at Josh. xv. 17 and Judg. iii. 9, makes Othniel the nephew, while in Judg. i. 13 C. Alex. makes him the brother, of Caleb. The Vulg. invariably: "Othniel filius Cenez, frater Caleb." Grammatically, both constructions are equally admissible. For that adopted by Dr. Cassel, cf. Gen. xxvii. 5; 1 Sam. xxvi. 6, etc.; for the other, Gen. xxix. 10; 1 Sam. xiv. 3, etc. That the distinctive accent over Kenaz is not incompatible with either construction, or rather does not commit the Masorites to the construction adopted by Dr. Cassel, as Keil intimates, may be seen from Gen. xxiv. 15, etc.

Bachmann favors the alternate rendering—"filius Kenasi fratris Calebi"—on the following grounds: 1. "The fact that elsewhere Caleb is always designated as 'the son of Jephunneh,' while Othniel is always spoken of as 'the

**Othniel** had conquered the stronghold, — the victory was his, and Caleb gave him his daughter. The narrator forthwith adds an incident that marked the peaceful entrance of the young wife into the house of her husband, and afforded an interesting glimpse of her character. Caleb, the head of the tribe, was rich; to him, and to him alone, the fine fields and estates about Hebron had been given. Only Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, had received them, not the whole family (Josh. xxi. 12). Othniel was poor. In the character of a poor, younger son, he had achieved heroic deeds. Not *he* thinks of goods and possessions; but so much the more does the young Achsah, who has been accustomed to wealth. Such is the course of the world. They are on their way to Hebron, a way which leads through fertile, well-watered fields. Their journey is a beautiful triumphal procession, over which the aged father rejoices. Achsah urges (וְהַתְּבַרְכָּהּ from כָּבֵד) her husband to seize the opportunity, and petition her father for the noble field through which they are passing.<sup>1</sup> He does it not. He deems it an act unworthy of himself. She, however, like a true woman, too sagacious to lose the proper moment, proceeds herself ingeniously to call her father's attention to the fact that she desires not merely honor, but also property. She slides from her ass — suddenly, as if she fell (וְהַשְׁכַּח) — so that her father asks, "What is the matter with thee?" Her answer has a double sense: "Thou gavest me away into a dry land, give me also springs." O give me a blessing!

אֶרֶץ הַנֶּגֶב ("land of the south") is land destitute of water. No greater blessing there than springs. They make the parched field flourishing and productive (cf. Ps. cxxvi. 4). Now, just as springs are a sign of abundance and wealth, so *negeb* is a symbol of indigence and want. Thou gavest me away, says Achsah, in words full of concealed meaning, into a dry land — to a poor husband; give me also springs to enrich the land — my husband. Caleb understood and gave, the more liberally, no doubt, for the ingenious manner in which she asked. He gave her the upper and lower springs. גְּלֵל, for springs, occurs only in this passage. It is obviously not to be derived from גָּלַל, in the sense of rolling, turning, — from which comes גְּלֵלָה, "pitcher," so named on account of its round form, — but is connected with old roots expressive, like the Sanskr. *gala*, "water," of welling, bubbling (cf. Diefenbach, *Wörterb. der Goth.*

son of Kenaz," raises a presumption against the supposition that Othniel is the brother of Caleb in the strict sense of the term. . . . 2. Caleb was 85 years old when Hebron was bestowed on him (Josh. xiv. 10, 14); and when he took possession of it, must have been some years older. Accordingly, if Othniel was his brother, even though his junior by from twenty to thirty years, — and a greater difference in age is surely not to be supposed, — it would follow, that the bold hero who won his wife as a prize for storming Debir was at that time from sixty to seventy years of age; that about eighteen years later, he entered on his office as Judge as a man of full eighty years of age; and that, even though he died some time before the end of the forty years' rest (ch. iii. 11), he reached an age of 120 years or more, which is scarcely probable. 3. According to ch. iii. 9, Othniel is the first deliverer of Israel fallen under the yoke of heathen oppressors in consequence of its apostasy to heathen idolatry. Now, since idolatry is said to have become prevalent in Israel only after the generation that had entered Canaan with Joshua and Caleb had died off (ch. ii. 10), it is clear that Othniel is regarded as belonging not to this, but to the

*Sprache*, i. 183). What springs they were which Othniel received, it is difficult to say. Were they those which Robinson found on the way to Hebron, within an hour's distance! Le Clerc wonders why this family history is here related. Most certainly not without intending to make the zeal of Caleb, the unselfishness of Othniel, and the prudence of Achsah, points of instruction. The Jewish exegesis, reproduced by Raschi, is essentially right, when it explains that Othniel was poor in everything but the law, in everything, that is, but piety and solidity of character.<sup>2</sup> History and tradition present many another pair like Othniel and Achsah. The thing to be especially noted, however, is the firmness of Othniel in resisting his wife's enticement to make requests which it is more becoming in her to make. Not many men have so well withstood the ambitious and eagerly craving projects of their wives.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Compare Hom. Hints on ch. i. 17-20.

[SCOTT: It is a very valuable privilege to be closely united with families distinguished for faith and piety; and to contract marriage with those who have been "trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

THE SAME: Nature teaches us to desire temporal benefits for our children; but grace will teach us to be far more desirous and earnest in using means that they may be partakers of spiritual blessings.

THE SAME: If affection to a creature animates men to such strenuous efforts and perilous adventures, what will the love of God our Saviour do, if it bear rule in our hearts?

THE SAME: If earthly parents, "being evil, know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more will our Heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him!"

HENRY: From this story we learn, 1st. That it is no breach of the tenth commandment moderately to desire those comforts and conveniences of this life which we see attainable in a fair and regular way. . . . 3dly. That parents must never think that lost, which is bestowed on their children for their real advantage, but must be free in giving them portions as well as maintenance, especially when dutiful.

P. H. S.: Three Lessons from an Ancient Wedding: 1. Caleb's lesson: Pious zeal for God and an heroic character are better than wealth or social rank. To such as possess these qualities let fathers freely give their daughters. 2. Othniel's

succeeding generation, which agrees better with the hypothesis that he is the son of a younger brother of Caleb, than that he is such a brother himself. 4. Finally, whatever, in view of Lev. xviii. 12, 13, may be thought of the difficulty of a marriage between an uncle and a niece, that interpretation surely deserves to be preferred which, while it is possible in itself, does not raise the said difficulty at all" — TR.]

1 [WORDSWORTH: "The field; that is, the field which had been given to Othniel when the Book of Judges was written and which was known to be well supplied with water. This explanation of the article supposes that the words attributed to Achsah in the text, were not the very words she used." — TR.]

2 At an early date, the passage 1 Chron. iv. 10, where Jabez says, "Oh, that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me," was already explained as referring to Othniel (cf. *Temura*, p. 16, a). Jerome was acquainted with a Jewish opinion according to which Jabez was a teacher of the law (cf. 1 Chron. ii. 55), who instructed the sons of the Kenite, of *Quæst. Hebr. in Lib. i. Paral.*, ed. Migne, iii. 1370

lesson: A wife is to be won for her own sake, not as the means of gaining access to her father's wealth. 3. Achsah's lesson: It is the wife's duty to promote the interests and honor of her husband. Wealth is a source of weight and influence, and a means of usefulness. Who knows how much this and similar thoughtful acts of Achsah contributed to shape the subsequent life-work of Othniel as judge of Israel.

THE SAME: It is more honorable to woman to be "sold" (a term entirely inapplicable, how-

ever, to the case in hand), than to have a husband bought for her by her father's gold or lands. When a man stormed the walls of a stronghold, or slew an hundred Philistines by personal prowess, or paid fourteen years of responsible service, for a wife, or when, as in the days of chivalry, he ran tilts and courted dangers in her behalf, however grotesque the performance, it indicated not only solidity of character in the wooer, but also a true and manly respect for woman, which is not possessed by all men of modern days.—Tr.]

### *The Kenites take up their abode in the territories of Judah.*

#### CHAPTER I. 16.

16 And the children [sons] of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up out of [from] the city of palm-trees with the children [sons] of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which *lieth* in the south of Arad; and they [he<sup>1</sup>] went and dwelt among<sup>2</sup> the people.

#### TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 16. — *He*, i. e., the Kenite. The subject of הַכֵּנִי is הַכֵּנִי, the Kenite, collective term for the tribe. — Tr.]

[2 Ver. 16. — בְּתוֹכָם, with, near, the people, but still in settlements of their own, cf. ver. 21. Dr. Cassel's *unter* answers to the English *among*. — Tr.]

#### EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 16. And the sons of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law. Kenite is the name of a heathen tribe, which in Gen. xv. 19 is enumerated among the nations hostile to Israel. In the vision of Balaam it is mentioned in connection with Amalek (Num. xxiv. 21). It is there said of the tribe, "In the rock hast thou put thy nest" (בְּרֶקֶת, from רָקַע, "nest"). "Strong," indeed, "is their dwelling-place." The Kenites were a tribe of the wilderness, troglodytes, who dwelt in the grottoes which abound everywhere in Palestine, but especially in its southern parts. Barth, in 1847, saw caves at the lower Jordan, "high up in the steep face of the precipitous rock, on the left, inhabited by human beings and goats, though it is impossible to see how they get there" (Ritter, xv. 465). At the Dead Sea, Lynch discovered grottoes in the rocks, the entrance to which, in spite of all proficiency in climbing, could not be found. The name of the tribe, Kenites, is doubtless derived from קֵנ,

which means an elevated hiding-place in the rocks, as well as a nest. The term troglodytes, likewise, comes from τράγλη, "grotto," and is applied to both birds and human beings. As Jeremiah (xlix. 16) exclaims, "though thou shouldst make thy nest as high as the eagle," so Æschylus (*Choëphoræ*, 249) calls the nest of the eagle's brood, σκήνημα, "dwelling-place."

It is from this passage, and from ch. iv. 11, that we first learn that Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses,<sup>1</sup> belonged to one of the Kenite families. Moses, when a fugitive in the desert, found an asylum and a wife in the retirement of Jethro's household. From that time, this family, without losing its independent and separate existence, was closely allied with all Israel. But it was only this family, and not the whole Kenite nation, that entered into this alliance. Else, how could the Kenite be named among enemies in the prophetic announcements of Gen. xv., and with Amalek in the vision of Balaam? Moreover, the text clearly intimates that the sons of the Kenite adhered to Israel, not as Kenites, but as descendants of Jethro, the father-

1 Earlier scholars (Le Clerc, Lightfoot, *Opera*, ii. 531) were already struck by the Targum's constant substitution of שְׁלִמְאָה, Salmaah for Kenite. In this passage also it reads, "the sons of Salmaah." Even Jewish authors were at a loss how to explain this. As it affords a specimen of the traditional exegesis of the Jews, already current in the Targum on this passage, I will here set down the explanation of this substitution: The Kenite of our passage is identified with the *Kinin* of 1 Chron. ii. 55, who are there described as "the families of the *Sopherim*." But how came the Kenites to hold this office, i. e. after times so highly honored, and filled by men learned in the law (cf. *Sanhedrin*, p. 104 a and 106 a)? The father-in-law of Moses — (tradition makes him

flee from the council of Pharaoh of which he was a member. *Sota*, 11 a) — is the Kenite who, when the latter wandered in the desert (Ex. ii. 20, 21), gave him bread (*lechem*) and also, through his daughter, a house (*beth*). Now, the same chapter of Chronicles, vers. 51, 54, names a certain *Salma*, and styles him the "father of *Eth-lechem*." The father of this "Bread-house" is then identified with *Jethro*. Consequently, the sons of the Kenite are the sons of Salmaah, and thus their name itself indicates how they attained to the dignity accorded them. The Targum on Chronicles (*ed. Wilna*, 1836, p. 3, A) expresses it thus: "They were the sons of Zippora who (in their capacity of *Sopherim*) enjoyed, together with the families of the Levites, the glory of having descended from Moses, the teacher of Israel."

**In-law of Moses.**<sup>1</sup> It is the constant aim of the historian of the conquest of Canaan by Israel, to show that *every promise was fulfilled, and that no one who at any time showed kindness failed of his promised reward*. Caleb's constancy and courage found their long-promised inheritance in Hebron. A recompense had also been promised to the sons of the Kenite. When Israel was on its journey through the desert (Num. x. 31), and Hobab (on the name, see below, on ch. iv. 11) desired to return to his old place of abode, Moses said: "Leave us not; thou knowest our places of encampment in the desert, and hast been to us instead of eyes. If thou go with us, every good thing with which God blesses us, we will share with thee." The fulfillment of this promise now takes place. The Kenites enter with the tribe of Judah into the inheritance of the latter, as into a domain in which they had always been at home. They share in the blessing bestowed by God on Israel.

**They went up from the City of Palms.** No other place than the plain of Jericho is ever called the City of Palms in the Scriptures. Although the city was destroyed, the palm-groves still existed. How was it possible to suppose,<sup>2</sup> in the face of Deut. xxxiv. 3 and Judg. iii. 13, that here suddenly, without any preparatory notice, another City of Palms is referred to! The statement here made, so far from occasioning difficulties, only testifies to the exactness of the narrator. Judah's camp was in Gilgal, whence they marched through Bezek against the enemy, and then to Hebron. Gilgal lay in the vicinity of Jericho. When the tribe decamped, the Kenite was unwilling to remain behind. On the march through the desert, their position as guides had of course always been in the van, and, therefore, with the tribe of Judah. They desire to enjoy their reward also in connection with this tribe, and hence the palms of overthrown Jericho cannot detain them. The region in which they were, can therefore be no other place of palms than that from which Judah broke up, namely, Jericho. In fact, the statement that they came from Jericho, proves the correctness of the view given above, that Gilgal was the place from which Judah set out to enter his territory.

**Into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in**

<sup>1</sup> This view does away with all those questions of which, after earlier expositors, Bertheau treats on pp. 24, 25.

<sup>2</sup> Into this error, Le Clerc has misled later expositors, and among them, Bertheau, p. 25. However, the wholly irrelevant passage of Diodorus (ii. 42), frequently cited to justify the assumption of another City of Palms, was already abandoned by Rosenmüller, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Ishak Chelo, the author of *Les chemins de Jérusalem*, in the 14th century, found Arad sparsely inhabited, by poor

the south of Arad. But why is the narrative of the Kenite expedition here introduced? It is a peculiarity of Hebrew narrators, that they weave in episodes like this and that of Othniel and Achsah, whenever the progress of the history, coming into contact with the place or person with which they are associated, offers an occasion. Hence we already find events communicated in the 15th chapter of Joshua, which occurred at a later date, but of which the author was reminded while speaking of the division of the land. The history of the conquest of their territory by Judah is very brief. First, the mountain district of Hebron and the northeastern part of the territory was taken possession of. Then, according to the plan laid down ver. 9, they turned to the south. Of this part of their undertaking no details are given; but as they were getting possession of the land in this direction, they came to Arad, where it pleased the Kenites to take up their abode, in close relations with Judah. A king formerly reigned at Arad, who attacked Israel when journeying in the desert (Num. xxi. 1), and was defeated by Moses. A king of Arad was also conquered by Joshua (Josh. xii. 14). After its occupancy by the tribe of Judah, the Kenites resided there. The position<sup>3</sup> of the place has been accurately determined by Robinson (*Bib. Res.* ii. 101, cf. Ritter, xiv. 121). Eusebius and Jerome had placed it twenty Roman miles, a camel's journey of about eight hours, from Hebron. This accords well with the position of the present *Tell 'Arad*, "a barren-looking eminence rising above the country around." From this fragmentary notice of the place, we may perhaps infer what it was that specially attracted the Kenites. If these tribes were attached to the Troglodyte mode of life, the Arabs still told Robinson of a "cavern" found there. The Kenites still held this region in the time of David; for from the vicinage of the places named in 1 Sam. xxx. 29 ff., especially Hormah, it appears that they are those to whom as friends he makes presents.<sup>4</sup> It is true, that when the terrible war between Saul and Amalek raged in this region, Saul, lest he should strike friend with foe, caused them to remove (1 Sam. xv. 6). After the victory, they must have returned again.

Arabs and Jews, who lived of their flocks. The Rabbi tends his sheep, and at the same time gives instruction to his pupils. Cf. Carmoly, *Itinéraires de la Terre Sainte* (Bruxelles, 1847), pp. 244, 245.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. 1 Sam. xxvii. 10, where the same local position is assigned to the Kenites, and spoken of by David as the scene of his incursions, in order to make the suspicious Philistines believe that he injures the friends of Israel.

*Simeon's territory is conquered, and Judah takes the Philistine cities.*

## CHAPTER I. 17-20.

17 And Judah went with Simeon his brother, and they slew [smote] the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it [executed the ban upon it].<sup>1</sup> And  
18 the name of the city was called<sup>2</sup> Hormah. Also [And] Judah took Gaza with the coast [territory] thereof, and Askelon with the coast [territory] thereof, and Ekron  
19 with the coast [territory] thereof. And the Lord [Jehovah] was with Judah; [.

and he drove out *the inhabitants* [obtained possession] of the mountain [mountains] but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley [for the inhabitants of the low country were not to be driven out],<sup>3</sup> because they had chariots of iron. And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moses [had] said: and he expelled thence the three sons of Anak.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 17. — The **לְחָרֹשׁ** (LXX. ἀνάημα), in cases like the present, was, as Hengstenberg (*Pent.* ii. 74) expresses it, "the compulsory devotion to the Lord of those who would not voluntarily devote themselves to him." To render the word simply by "destruction," as is done in the A. V. here and elsewhere, is to leave out the religious element of the act, and reduce it to the level of a common war measure. Cf. Winer, *Realwörterb.*, s. v. *Bann*; Smith's *Bib. Dict.* s. v. *Anathema*. — Tr.]

[2 Ver. 17. — **לְחָרֹשׁ**. Dr. Cassel translates it as if it were plural, and gives it the same subject with **לְחָרֹשׁ**, "they called." Correct, perhaps, as to fact, but grammatically less accurate than the A. V. **לְחָרֹשׁ** is the indefinite third person. Cf. Ges. *Gr.* 137, 3. — Tr.]

[3 Ver. 19. — Dr. Cassel: *denn nicht zu vertreiben waren die Bewohner der Niederung*. On the force of **יָ**, for (E. V. but), cf. Ges. *Gram.* § 155, p. 271. — The construction of **לֹא לְחָרֹשׁ** is unusual. According to Keil (and Bertheau) "**לֹא** is to be taken substantively, as in Amos vi. 10, in the same sense in which the later Scriptures use **יָ** before the infinitive, 2 Chron. v. 11; Esth. iv. 2, viii. 8; Eccles. iii. 14. Cf. Ges. *Gram.* § 132, 3, Rem. 1; Ewald, 237 c." Idea and expression might then be represented in English by the phrase: "there was no driving the enemy out." On **יָ**, see foot-note on p. 39. — Tr.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 17. And Judah went with Simeon his brother. The course of conquest by the tribes is regularly followed, but the narrative *delays* only at such points as are connected with noteworthy facts. When Judah had reached the south, and was in Arad, the statement was introduced that the Kenite settled there. After the conquest of the south, the conquerors turned toward the low country (ver. 9). In order to get there, they must traverse the territory of Simeon. Consequently, Judah goes with Simeon now, to assist him in gaining possession of his land. This expedition also offered an event which it was important to chronicle.

They smote the inhabitants of Zephath, and called the city Chormah. In itself considered, the mere execution of the ban of destruction on a city otherwise unknown, cannot be of such importance as would properly make it the only reported event of the campaign in Simeon's territory. The record must have been made with reference to some event in the earlier history of Israel.<sup>1</sup> The tribes had just been in Arad, where the Kenites settled. Now, according to the narrative in Num. xxi. 1 ff., it was the King of Arad who suddenly fell upon the people in their journey through the desert. The attack was made when the Israelitish host was in a most critical situation, which, to be sure, could not be said to be improved by the ban executed on the cities of the king after the victory was won. Not Arad, — for this retained its name, — but one

of the places put under the ban, we are told, received the name Hormah.<sup>2</sup> The vow in pursuance of which this ban was inflicted required its subsequent maintenance as much as its original execution. Thus much we learn from the passage in Numbers. That a close connection existed between Arad and Hormah is also confirmed by Josh. xii. 14, where a king of Arad and one of Hormah are named together. In the same way are the inhabitants of Hormah and the Kenites in Arad mentioned together, upon occasion of David's division of booty (1 Sam. xxx. 29). Since Moses was not able to occupy these regions, the banned city, as appears plainly from Josh. xii. 14, where a king of Hormah occurs, had been peopled and occupied anew. Hence it was the task of the tribe of Simeon, with the help of Judah, to restore the vow of Israel, and to change the Zephath of its heathen inhabitants once more into Hormah. That, in this respect also, the tribes observed the commands of Moses, and fulfilled what was formerly promised, — adjudging to one, reward, as to the Kenite; to another, the ban, as to Zephath, — this is the reason why this fact is here recorded. Robinson thought that there was every reason for supposing that in the position of the pass es-Sufāh, far down in the south, the locality of Zephath was discovered (*Bib. Res.* ii. 181). The position, as laid down on his map strikes me as somewhat remote from Tell 'Arād; and the name es-Sufāh, Arabic for "rock," cannot, on account of its general character, be considered altogether decisive.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, another Zephath actually occurs, near Mareshah (2 Chron. ix. 10),

he understood here, as in Gen. xxviii 19 and elsewhere, of one place or one city." — Tr.]

<sup>3</sup> Some ruins, named Sepāta by the Arabs, were found by Rowlands (cf. Ritter, xiv. 1084-5; Williams' *Holy City* i. 464), two and a half hours southwest of Khalasa (Robinson's Elusa), and have also been identified with Zephath. Their position is very different from that of Tell es-Sufāh. They also seem to me to lie too remote from Arad. That the Biblical name Zephath has been preserved, after the Jewish inhabitants for many centuries must have used, not that, but Hormah, does not appear at all probable. In the mountains of Ephraim, Eli Smith came into a village Um-Sufāh. "It reminded him of the locality of Hormah near the southern border of Palestine, both of which names [Um-Sufāh and Hormah] in Arabic designate such smooth tracts of rock" (Ritter, xvi. 561).

<sup>1</sup> Compare Rosenmüller, p. 25, and Hengstenberg, *Pent.* ii. p. 179, etc.

<sup>2</sup> The King of Arad only is spoken of, Num. xxi. 1, and it is not said that Arad was called Hormah. The "name of the (one) place," it is stated, they called Hormah, whereas they "banned their cities." Since, therefore, Arad and Hormah are distinguished, it is plain that this one place of the banned cities, which was called Hormah, was Zephath. — [BERTHEAU: "It has been thought, indeed, that the word

**חֶרֶם** in Num. xxi. 3, in the connection in which it stands, indicates that in the time of Moses the whole southern district received the name Hormah, whereas, according to our passage [*i. e.* Judg. i. 17] it was given only to the city of Zephath; but **חֶרֶם** never signifies "region," and must



not far from Elentheropolis, and Robinson (ii. 31) makes it probable that by the valley of Zephath in which King Asa fought, the wady is meant which "comes down from Beit Jibrin towards Tell es-Sâfieh." In the Middle Ages, a castle existing there, bore the name Alba Specula, Fortress of Observation, which at all events agrees with the signification of Zephath.

Ver. 18. And Judah took Gaza, Askelon, and Ekron. The territory assigned to Judah extended to the sea, including the Philistine coast-land, with their five cities. After the conquest of Simeon's lot their course descended from the hills into the lowlands (*Shephelah*, ver. 9), most probably by way of Beer-sheba, to the sea. In their victorious progress, they storm and seize Gaza, Askelon, and Ekron, pressing on from south to north. Although Ashdod is not mentioned here, it is natural to suppose, since it was included in the borders assigned to Judah (Josh. xv.), and lay on the road from Askelon to Ekron, that it was also taken, previous to the conquest of Ekron. Josephus, drawing the same inference, expressly includes it. It is said וַיִּבְּרוּ, "they took by storm." They were not able, at this time, so to take and hold these places as to expel their inhabitants. The tribe of Judah, which, as it seems, now continued the war alone, on the sea-coast fell in with cultivated cities, provided with all the arts of warfare. Israel at that time was not prepared for long and tedious wars. In swift and stormy campaigns, their divinely-inspired enthusiasm enabled them to conquer. On the mountains, where personal courage and natural strength alone came into play, they were entirely victorious, and held whatever they gained. It was only in the plains, where the inhabitants of the coast cities met them with the murderous opposition of iron chariots, that they gave up the duty of gaining entire mastery over the land.<sup>1 2</sup>

Ver. 19. For the inhabitants of the low country were not to be driven out, because they had iron chariots.<sup>3</sup> The noble simplicity

1 Thus an internal contradiction between this verse and the statement of the next that Judah failed to drive out the inhabitants of the low country, as asserted by Bähringer (Herz. *Real-Encycl.* xi. 554), does not exist.

2 [The author identifies the נֶגֶב, the inhabitants of which Judah failed to drive out, with the שְׁפֵלָה, ver. 9, and hence renders it (see ver. 19) by *Niederung*, "low country," prop. depression. Against this identification, accepted by Studer, Bertheau, Kell, and many others, Bachmann objects that, with the single exception of Jer. xlvii. 5, a poetic passage in a late prophet, נֶגֶב is never applied to the Philistine plain. "In accordance with its derivation, נֶגֶב denotes a valley-basin (cf. Robinson, *Phys. Geog.* p. 70), broadly extended it may be (Gen. xiv. 9, 10; Josh. xvii. 16; etc.), adapted for battle (Josh. viii. 13), susceptible of cultivation (Job xxxix. 10; Cant. ii. 1; Ps. lxxv. 14; etc.), but still always depressed between mountains and bordered by them. It never means a level plain or lowlands." Cf. Stanley, *Sinai and Pal.*, p. 476, Amer. ed. Bachmann, therefore, looks for the *Emek* — which, by the way, with the article, is not necessarily singular, but may be used collectively — within or at least very near the Mountains of Judah. "Of valleys affording room for the action of chariots, the mountains of Judah have several; e. g., the *Emek Zephaim*, Josh. xv. 8, southwest of Jerusalem, one hour long and one half hour broad, known as a battle-field in other times also (2 Sam. v. 18, 22; xxiii. 13); the *Emek ha-Elah*, Sam. xvii. 1, 2; the broad basins of the valleys of Jehoshaphat and Ben Hinnom near the northern boundary (see Rob. 268, 273); the great, basin-like plain of Beni Naim

of the narrative could not show itself more plainly "The Lord was with Judah, and he gained possession of the mountain district; but לֹא יִהְיֶה לָּהֶם לֵב לִּפְנֵי הָיָדָיִם, "they could not," is purposely avoided. They would have been quite able when God was with them; but when it came to a contest with iron chariots their faith failed them. The tribes of Joseph were likewise kept out of the low country because the inhabitants had chariots of iron (Josh. xvii. 16); but Joshua said (ver. 18), "Thou shalt (or canst) drive out the Canaanite, though he be strong." Iron chariots are known only to the Book of Judges, excepting the notice of them in the passage just cited from Joshua. The victory of Deborah and Barak over Jabin, king of Canaan, owed much of its glory to the fact that Sisera commanded nine hundred iron chariots. Bertheau rejects the earlier opinion that these chariots were *currus falcati*, scythe-chariots, on the ground that those were unknown to the Egyptians. He thinks it probable that the chariots of the Canaanites, like those of the Egyptians, were only made of wood, but with iron-clad corners, etc., and therefore very strong. But such chariots would never be called *iron* chariots. The Egyptian war-chariots which Pharaoh leads forth against Israel, are not so called. To speak of chariots as iron chariots, when they were in the main constructed of a different material, would be manifestly improper, unless what of iron there was about them, indicated their terrible destructive capacities. It has, indeed, been inferred from Xenophon's *Cyropædia* (vi. 1, 27), that scythe-chariots were first invented by Cyrus, and that they were previously unknown "in Media, Syria, Arabia, and the whole of Asia." But even if this Cyrus were to be deemed strictly historical, the whole notice indicates no more than the improvement of a similar kind of weapon. It does not at all prove that scythe-chariots did not previously exist. The principal improvement which the

in the east (see Rob. i. 488 ff.); and others. And that, in general, chariots in considerable numbers might be used in the mountain country, appears, with reference to a region a little further north, from 1 Sam. xiii. 5." Bachmann's view of the connection of ver. 19 with what precedes is as follows: Ver. 9. The battle of Bezek, etc., having secured Judah from attacks in the rear, and left him free to proceed in his undertakings, the theatre of these undertakings is divided by ver. 9 into three parts: the mountain country, the south (*negeb*), and the plain (*shephelah*). The conquest of the mountain country is illustrated by a couple of instances in vers. 10-15; that of the south is similarly indicated in vers. 16, 17; and that of the plain in ver. 18. Here, too, Judah was successful in his undertakings. As in the other cases, the places named here, Gaza, Askelon, Ekron, are only mentioned as examples of what took place in the *Shephelah* generally. The conquest of the western parts of the *Shephelah* being related, that of the eastern districts, nearer the mountains, was left to be inferred as a matter of course. Then, in ver. 19, the narrative returns to the mountain country, in order to supplement vers. 10-15 by indicating, what those verses did not show, that the conquest of this division, the first of the three mentioned, was not complete. — Ta.]

3 How properly the readings of the Septuagint are not considered as authorities against the Hebrew text, is sufficiently shown by the single fact that here they read, "ἔτι Πηλὸς διεστέλλετο αὐτοῖς," which also passed over into the Syriac version. A few Codd. add "καὶ ἄρματα σιδῆρα αὐτοῖς."

4 Cf. Joh. Gottl. Schoeider in his edition of the *Cyropædia* (Lips. 1840), p. 368.

Cyrus of Xenophon introduced, was, that he changed the chariot-rampart, formed perhaps after the manner of the Indian battle-array (*akschauhini*;<sup>1</sup> the idea of our game of chess) into a means of aggressive warfare. For this purpose, he changed the form of the chariot, and added the scythe to the axle-tree. But the chariots of our passage must already have been intended for aggressive action, since otherwise the purpose of the iron is incomprehensible. Nor does Xenophon assert that Cyrus was the first who affixed scythes to chariots, although he would not have failed to do so if that had been his opinion. It is, moreover, in itself not probable. Xenophon mentions that the (African) Cyrenians "still" had that kind of chariots which Cyrus invented.<sup>2</sup> And Strabo informs us that in his time the Nigretes, Pharusii, and Ethiopians, African tribes, made use of the scythe-chariot.<sup>3</sup> The changes introduced in the chariot by Cyrus, were made in view of a war against the Assyrians, whom Xenophon distinguishes from the Syrians. But from a statement of Ctesias<sup>4</sup> we learn that the Assyrian armies already had scythe-chariots. The same occasion induced Cyrus to clothe his chariot-warriors in armor. For at all events, Assyrian monuments represent the charioteers encased in coats of mail.<sup>5</sup> It serves to explain the term *iron chariots*, that Xenophon also speaks of *iron scythes* (*δρέπανα σιδηρὰ*). Curtius (iv. 9, 4) describes chariots which carried iron lances on their poles (*ex summo tenone hastæ præfixæ ferro eminebant*), for which the form of Assyrian chariots seems to be very well adapted. Representations of them sufficiently indicate the horrors of these instruments of war, by the bodies of the slain between their wheels.

Ver. 20. And they gave Hebron unto Caleb. This statement, even after that of ver. 10, is by no means superfluous. Now, and not before, could Caleb receive Hebron as a quiet possession. Judah must first enter his territory. When the conquest was completed,—and it was completed after the western parts of the mountain region also submitted,—the tribe of Judah entered upon its possessions; and then the aged hero received that which had been promised him. Then also, most likely, transpired that beautiful episode which gave to Othniel his wife and property.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Vers. 4–20. Obedient, believing, united Israel is attended by victory. And in victory it knows

<sup>1</sup> Böhlen, *Altes Indien*, ii. 66.

<sup>2</sup> [On this sentence of our author, Bachmann remarks: "Cassel's explanation that the Cyrenians had 'still' that kind of chariots which Cyrus invented, is the opposite of what Xenophon, l. c., expressly and repeatedly declares, namely, that Cyrus abolished (*κατέσχευε*) both the earlier (*πρόσθεν οὖσαν*) Trojan method of chariot-warfare, and also that still in use (*ἐν τῇ καὶ νῦν οὖσαν*) among the Cyrenians, which formerly (*τὸν πρόσθεν χρόνον*) was also practiced by the Medes, Syrians, etc." Bertheau and Bachmann (Keil, *loc.*) resist the conversion of "iron chariots" into *currus falcati* on the ground that these were unknown before Cy-

rus, who invented them, *Cyropædia*, vi. 1, 27, 30. On the Egyptian war-chariot, see Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs*, i. 350. — Tr.]

<sup>3</sup> Lib. xvii. 3, 7, ed. Paris, p. 103: "χαρύνται δὲ καὶ δρεπανόβοις ἄμασσι."

<sup>4</sup> In the *Bibl. Hist.* of Diodor si, ii. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Layard, *Nineveh and its Remains*, ii. 335. [For an account of the Assyrian war-chariot, p. 349. On p. 353, Layard remarks: "Chariots armed with scythes are not seen in the Assyrian sculpture, although mentioned by Ctesias as being in the army of Niass." — Tr.]

how to punish and reward. Adoni-bezek terribly experiences what he had inflicted on others, but the sons of the Kenite dwell like brethren in the midst of Judah. The Canaanite is chastised; but the Kenite reaps the fruits of conquest. The unbelievers among the spies formerly sent by Moses are infamous, but Caleb gains an inheritance full of honor. Thus, faith makes men united before action; after it, just. Men are wise enough to give every one his own (*suum cuique*), only so long as they continue obedient toward God. For faith

1. regards that which is God's; and, therefore, 2. awards according to real deserts. Othniel obtained Caleb's daughter, not because he was his nephew (*nepos*), but because he took Kirjath-sepher. Before God, no nepotism holds good, for it is a sign of moral decay; on the contrary, he gives the power of discerning spirits. He only, who in the sanctuary of God has inquired after "Light and Righteousness" (*Urim and Thummim*), can properly punish and reward.

STARKE (ver. 16): The children of those parents who have deserved well of the church of God, should have kindness shown, and benefits extended to them before others. For ingratitude is a shameful thing.

THE SAME (ver. 17): Covenants, even when involving dangers, must be faithfully kept by all, but especially by brothers and sisters.

[SCOTT (ver. 19): Great things might be achieved by the professors of the gospel, if they unitedly endeavored to promote the common cause of truth and righteousness; for then "the Lord would be with them," and every mountain would sink into a plain. But when outward difficulties are viewed by the eye of sense, and the almighty power of God is forgotten, then no wonder we do not prosper; for according to our faith will be our vigor, zeal, and success. Love of ease, indulgence, and worldly advantages, both spring from and foster unbelief. Thus many an awakened sinner, who seemed to have escaped Satan's bondage, "is entangled again, and overcome, and his last state is worse than the first." Thus even many a believer who begins well is hindered: he grows negligent and unwatchful and afraid of the cross; his graces languish, his evil propensities revive; Satan perceives his advantage, and plies him with suitable temptations; the world recovers its hold; he loses his peace, brings guilt into his conscience, anguish into his heart, discredit on his character, and reproach on the gospel; his hands are tied, his mouth is closed, and his usefulness ruined. — Tr.]

rus, who invented them, *Cyropædia*, vi. 1, 27, 30. On the Egyptian war-chariot, see Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs*, i. 350. — Tr.]

<sup>3</sup> Lib. xvii. 3, 7, ed. Paris, p. 103: "χαρύνται δὲ καὶ δρεπανόβοις ἄμασσι."

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*Benjamin is inactive, and allows the Jebusite to remain in Jerusalem. The House of Joseph emulates Judah, and takes Bethel.*

## CHAPTER I. 21-26.

21 And<sup>1</sup> the children [sons] of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem: but the Jebusites dwell [dwelt] with [among]<sup>2</sup> the children [sons] of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day. And the house of Joseph, they also<sup>3</sup> went up against Beth-el: and the Lord [Jehovah] was with them. And the house of Joseph sent to descry [spy out the entrance to]<sup>4</sup> Beth-el. Now the name of the city before was Luz. And the spies saw a man come forth out of the city, and they said unto him, Shew us, we pray thee, the entrance into the city, and we will shew thee mercy [favor]. And when [omit: when] he shewed them the entrance into the city, [and] they smote the city with the edge of the sword: but they let go the man and all his family. And the man went into the land of the Hittites, and built [there] a city, and called the name thereof Luz: which is the name thereof unto this day.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[<sup>1</sup> Ver. 21. — The **ו** would be better taken adversitively: But. It contrasts the conduct of Benjamin with that of Caleb, ver. 20. — Tr.]

[<sup>2</sup> Ver. 21. — Cf. note 2, on ver. 16, and 3 on ver. 29. — Tr.]

[<sup>3</sup> Ver. 22. — **וַיֵּלְכוּ** looks back to ver. 3 ff and intimates a parallelism between the conduct of the House of Joseph and that of Judah and his brother Simeon. — Tr.]

[<sup>4</sup> Ver. 23. — Dr. Cassel apparently supplies **מְבֹרָא** from the next verse. **הַיָּר**, it is true, is usually followed by the accusative, not by **ב**. But on the other hand, **מְבֹרָא** is put in the const. state before **עִיר** (cf. vers. 24, 25); whereas, if we supply it here, we must suppose it joined to **עִיר** by means of a preposition. It is as well, therefore, to say, with Bertheau, that "the verb is connected with **ב** because the spying is to fasten itself, and that continuously, upon Bethel, cf. **ב** with **וַיִּשְׁכַּח** and **וַיִּהְיֶה**," or with Bachmann, that "**ב** indicates the hostile character of the spying." **מְבֹרָא** is used as a general expression for any way or mode of access into the city: "Show us how to get in," is the demand of the spies. — Tr.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 21. And the sons of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusite. At Josh. xv. 63, at the close of a detailed description of the territory of Judah, it is said, "As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the sons of Judah could not drive them out; and the Jebusites dwelt with the sons of Judah in Jerusalem unto this day." This verse has been thought to contradict the one above. In reality, however, it only proves the exactness of the statements. The boundary line of the tribes of Benjamin and Judah ran through the district of Jerusalem, through the valley of Ben Hinnom, south of the city (Josh. xv. 8). The city already extended outward from the foot of the citadel. The remark of Josephus,<sup>1</sup> that, in the passage above discussed, Judg. i. 8, the tribe of Judah took only the lower city, not the citadel, has great probability on its side. The conquest of the citadel was not their business at the time. It was sufficient for them to pursue the hostile king into his city, and then lay that in ashes. The citadel lay within the tribe of Benjamin. Nevertheless, on account of this fortress, Judah, also, was not able to expel the Jebusites, who continued to live side by side with them in the district of Jerusalem. At all events, the Jebusites in Jerusalem belonged to the territory of Judah so far at least, that the failure to expel

them must be mentioned in connection with the boundaries of Judah. Still more necessary was it to repeat this statement in connection with Benjamin, within whose limits the city and fortress of the Jebusites were situated. Their expulsion properly devolved on this tribe. Successful occupation of the stronghold would have greatly increased the honor and consideration of Benjamin. The importance of the place, David recognized as soon as he became king. But Benjamin was content when the Jebusites, humbled by Judah, offered no resistance, left them in possession of the fortress, and lived peaceably together with them. It has been justly observed, that different terms are employed in speaking of the failure of Judah and Benjamin respectively to drive out the Jebusites. Of Judah it is said (Josh. xv. 63), "they could not," because the Jebusites had their stronghold in another tribe. But of Benjamin this expression is not used, because they were wanting in disposition and energy for the struggle that devolved upon them. Cf. on ch. xix. 12.

Ver. 22. And the house of Joseph, they also went up toward Bethel. This action of the house of Joseph is told by way of contrast with the house of Benjamin. The tribe of Benjamin lay between Judah and Ephraim (Josh. xviii. 11); and Bethel, within its limits, formed a counterpart to Jerusalem. Historically, Bethel is celebrated for the blessing there promised to Jacob, and afterwards less favorably for the idolatrous worship of Jero

<sup>1</sup> Ant. v. 2, 2: Χαλεπή δ' ἦν ἡ καθύπερθεν αὐτοῖς αἰρεῖσθαι, etc.

boam. Geographically, it was important on account of its position and strength. As Jebus and Jerusalem are always identified, so it is everywhere remarked of Bethel, that it was formerly Luz; and as Jebus indicated particularly the fortress, Jerusalem the city, — although the latter name also embraced both, — so a similar relation must be assumed to have existed between Bethel and Luz. Otherwise the border of Benjamin could not have run south of Luz (Josh. xviii. 13), while nevertheless Bethel was reckoned among the cities of Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 22). This assumption, moreover, explains the peculiar phraseology of Josh. xviii. 13: "And the border went over from thence toward Luz (after which we expect the usual addition "which is Bethel;" but that which does follow is:) on the south side of Luz, which is Bethel. It explains likewise the mention, Josh. xvi. 2, of the border "from Bethel to Luz," i. e. between Bethel and Luz. The latter was evidently a fortress, high and strong, whose city descended along the mountain-slope. When Jacob erected his altar, it must have been on this slope or in the valley. One name designated both fortress and city, but this does not militate against their being distinguished from each other. Bethel belonged to two tribes in a similar manner as Jerusalem. The capture of Luz by Joseph would not have been told in a passage which treats of the conflicts of the individual tribes in their own territories, if that fortress had not belonged to the tribes of Joseph. By the conquest of Luz, Joseph secured the possession of Bethel, since both went by that name, just as David, when he had taken the fortress of the Jebusite, was for the first time master of Jerusalem. This deed is related as contrasting with the conduct of Benjamin. Benjamin did nothing to take the fortress of Zion: Joseph went up to Luz, and God was with him. This remark had been impossible, if, as has been frequently assumed,<sup>1</sup> the tribe of Joseph had arbitrarily appropriated to itself the city which had been promised to Benjamin. The view of ancient Jewish expositors, who assume a Bethel in the valley and one on the mountain, does not differ from that here suggested. — Robinson seems to have established the position of the ancient Bethel near the present Beitin, where scattered ruins occupy the surface of a hill-point. A few minutes to the N. E., on the highest spot of ground in the vicinity, are other ruins, erroneously supposed to be Ai by the natives: these also perhaps belonged to Bethel.<sup>2</sup> It cannot, however, be said, that until Robinson this position was entirely unknown. Esthori ha-Parchi, who in his time found it called Bethai, the *l* having fallen away, was evidently acquainted with it.<sup>3</sup> In another work of the fourteenth century the then current name of Bethel is said to be Bethin.<sup>4</sup>

Vers. 23-25. And the house of Joseph sent to spy out. *לְיָדָאֵם* from *לָקַח*, to travel around, in order to find an entrance less guarded and inaccessible. Luz appeared to be very strong and well guarded, and for a long time the assailants vainly

sought a suitable opportunity for a successful assault. When the Persians besieged Sardis, their efforts were long in vain. One day a Persian saw a Lydian, whose helmet had fallen over the ram part, fetch it back by a hitherto unnoticed way. The man was followed, and the city was taken (Herod. i. 84). A similar accident favored the conquest of the fortress. The spies saw a man who had come out of the city. He failed to escape them. They compelled him to disclose the entrance. They promised him peace and mercy on condition of showing them the right way. He did it. It seems not even to have been necessary to storm the city; they fell upon the inhabitants unawares. Only the man who had assisted them, and his family, were spared. They let him go in peace. He was evidently no Ephialtes, who had betrayed the city for money. Doing it under compulsion, and unconsciously serving a great cause,<sup>5</sup> no calamity befell him, and he found a new country. It not only behoves the people of God to perform what they have promised, but Jewish tradition followed persons like Rahab and this man, as those who had furthered the course of sacred history against their own people, with peculiar kindness. This man, like Rahab, is blessed for all time (cf. *Jalkut* on the passage, p. 8, d).

Ver. 26. And the man went into the land of the Hittites. It evinces a special interest in the man that his fortunes are traced even into a strange land. Greek patriotism relates that Ephialtes fared as he deserved;<sup>6</sup> our history employs the favorable destiny which befell this man, to show that as he did not designedly for the sake of money practice treason, so he was also the instrument of setting a prosperous enterprise on foot. But where is the land of the *Chittim* (Hittites) to which he went? In nearly all passages in which Scripture makes mention of the Sons of Cheth (*חֵתִים*, E. V. Heth), the Chitti (*חִתִּי*, E. V. Hittite), and the Chittim (*חִתִּים*, E. V. Hittites), the name appears to be a general term, like the word Canaanite. Especially in the three passages where the *Chittim* are mentioned<sup>7</sup> (Josh. i. 4; 1 Kgs. x. 29; 2 Kgs. vii. 6), their land and kings are placed between Egypt and Aram in such a way as seems to be applicable only to the populations of Canaan. Movers<sup>8</sup> has successfully maintained that *חֵתִים* and *חִתִּים* refer to the same race of people; but it cannot be accepted that this race consisted only of the *Kittim* of Cyprus. It must rather be assumed that the Chittim answer to a more general conception, which also gave to the Kittim, their colonists, the name they bore. The historical interpretation of Kittim, which applied it to Ionians, Macedonians, and Romans, would not have been possible, if the name had not carried with it the notion of *coast-dwellers*,<sup>9</sup> an idea which comparative philology may find indicated. Now, it is unquestionable that the Phœnician cities, with Tyre at

<sup>1</sup> Already by Reland, *Palæstina*, p. 841.

<sup>2</sup> Robinson, *Bibl. Res.* i. 448.

<sup>3</sup> *Kaftor ve Pharack* (Berlin edition), ch. xi. pp. 47, 48.

<sup>4</sup> *Zuuz*, in Asher's *Benj. of Tudela*, li. 430.

<sup>5</sup> Ishak Chelo in Carnoly, pp. 249, 250.

<sup>6</sup> The German traitor Segestes merely alleges that he follows higher reasons, although he knows that "*proditores etiam ius quos antequam inveniunt sunt.*" Tacit., *Annal.* i. 58, 2.

<sup>7</sup> Israel saw the hand of a higher Helper in such assistance; and hence it had no hatred toward the instruments

<sup>8</sup> Ephialtes was the traitor of Thermopylae, cf. Herod. vii. 213. Traditions are still current of a traitor at Jena (1806), who was obliged to flee into exile.

<sup>9</sup> [That *κ*, where this people is spoken of under the plural form of its patronymic, which happens only five times — at Judg. i. 26, 2 Chron. i. 17, and the places named in the text. — Tr.]

<sup>8</sup> *Phönizier*, ii. 2, 213, etc.

<sup>9</sup> I have already directed attention to this in the *Mag. Alterthümer* (Berlin, 1848), p. 281.

their head, are even on their own coins designated by the terms *כתר* and *הדר*. As from its lowlands, "Canaan" became the general popular name of Palestine, so likewise to a certain extent the name Chittim became a general term applied to all Canaanites. When the panic-struck king of Aram thinks that Israel has received support from the kings of Egypt and the Chittim (2 Kgs. vii. 6), this latter name can only signify the coast-cities, whose power, from Tyre upwards, was felt throughout the world. From the fact that our passage merely says that the man went into the land of Chittim,<sup>1</sup> and presupposes the city built by him as still known, it may reasonably be inferred that he went to the familiarly known Chittim north of Israel. The probability is great enough to justify our seeking this Luz upon the Phœnician coast or islands. A remarkable notice in the Talmud (*Sota*, 46 b), derived from ancient tradition, may lead to the same conclusion: Luz is the place where the dyeing of *תְּכֵלֶת* is carried on, where there are hyacinthian<sup>2</sup> purple dyeing-establishments. Down to the most recent times, the coast from Tyre upwards, as far as the Syrian Alexandria, was very rich in purple (Ritter, xvi. 611 [Gage's Transl. iv. 280]). Now, pretty far away to the north, it is true, in the present Jebel el-Aala, at a point where a splendid northwest prospect over the plain to the lake of Antioch offers itself, Thomson<sup>3</sup> found hitherto wholly unknown ruins bearing the name of Kûlb Lousy, with remnants of old and splendid temples. The surname Kûlb<sup>4</sup> might authorize the inference that the dyeing-business was formerly exercised there. The existence of temple-ruins, concerning which the Druses said that they had been without worshippers from time immemorial, explains also another remarkable tradition of the Talmud: that Luz is a city which the conquerors of the land did not destroy, and to which the angel of death never comes, but that they who feel the approach of death, leave the city of their own accord. Traditions like this are characteristic of Sun-worship. In Delos no one was allowed to die or to be buried.<sup>5</sup> To Claros no serpents came. Neither could they penetrate to the land of the Astypalæans, on the island Cos. The island Cos is at the same time one of the seats of the ancient purple-trade. In the Syrian city Emesa there was a temple of the Sun, on account of which—as the story still went in Mohammedan times—scorpions and venomous animals cannot live there.<sup>6</sup> Name, ruins, and tradition would therefore tend to identify Kûlb Lousy as the remnant of an ancient city, distinguished like Cos for a specific form of industry and for its sun-worship, if indeed Cos itself (*כתר*) be not understood by it.

Luz is described by its name as a place of *almond-trees* (Gen. xxx. 37). And indeed, philologically Luz is akin to *nuz*, nut. The Greek *κάρπος* signifies almond (on account of its shape) as well as nut and egg.<sup>7</sup> Eusebius was induced to identify the land of the Chittim with Cyprus, the rather

because the Cyprian almonds were celebrated in antiquity.<sup>8</sup> The almond-tree has always abounded in the holy land. The cities are in ruins, but the tree still flourishes.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

The cessation of perfect obedience is attended by the cessation of perfect victory. Benjamin does not expel the hostile Jebusite from Jerusalem because he has lost his first love. The tribes of Joseph, on the other hand, are able to conquer Bethel, because God is with them. Benjamin, the valiant tribe, is alone to blame, if it failed to triumph; for when Bethel resisted the sons of Joseph the latter were aided by a fortunate incident. Benjamin did not conquer Jerusalem; therefore, not the king out of Benjamin (Saul), but the ruler out of Judah (David), dwelt therein. However, it is of no avail to conquer by faith, unless it be also maintained in faith; for Bethel became afterwards a Beth-aven, a House of Sin.

STARKE: Ill got, ill spent; but that also which has been rightly got, is apt to be lost, if we make ourselves unworthy of the divine blessing, just as these places were again taken from the Israelites.

[WORDSWORTH: Here then was a happy opportunity for the man of Bethel; he might have dwelt with the men of Joseph at Bethel, and have become a worshipper of the true God, and have thus become a citizen forever of the heavenly Bethel, the house of God, which will stand forever. But . . . he quits the house of God to propagate heathenism and idolatry. The man of Bethel, therefore, is presented to us in this Scripture as a specimen of that class of persons, who help the Church of God in her work from motives of fear, or of worldly benefit, and not from love of God, and who, when they have opportunities of spiritual benefit, slight those opportunities, and even shun the light, and go away from Bethel, the house of God, as it were, unto some far-off land of the Hittites, and build there a heathen Luz of their own. — THE SAME: There are four classes of persons, whose various conduct toward the Church of God, and to the gospel preached by her, is represented by four cases in the Books of Joshua and Judges; namely, — 1. There is this case of the man of Bethel. 2. There is the case of the Kenites, in ver. 16, who helped Judah after their victories in Canaan, and are received into fellowship with them. 3. There is the case of the Gibeonites, who came to Joshua from motives of *fear*, and were admitted to dwell with Israel, as hewers of wood and drawers of water. 4. There is the case of Rahab. She stands out in beautiful contrast to the man of Bethel. He helped the spies of Joseph, and was spared, with his household, but did not choose to live in their Bethel. But Rahab received the spies of Joshua, even before he had gained a single victory, and she professed her faith in their God; and she was spared, she and her household, and became a mother in Israel, an ancestress of Christ (see Josh. vi. 25). — TR.]

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Bochart, *Hieroicozon*, ii. 740. *Aruch* (ed. Amsteld.)

p. 89, s. v. *כלבור*.

<sup>5</sup> On this and the following notices, which will be more thoroughly treated in the second part of my *Hieroicozon* compare meanwhile, *Ælian*, *Hist. Anim.* V. cap. viii. cap. x. 49.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Ritter, xvii. 1010.

<sup>7</sup> Casaubon, on *Athenæus*, p. 65.

<sup>8</sup> *Athenæus*, p. 52; cf. Meursius, *Cyprus*, p. 80.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *ἀκρί*, *Cos* (the island Cos), *cautes*, *costa*, *côte*, *ΰστε*.

<sup>2</sup> The Sept. constantly (with barely two exceptions) translate *תְּכֵלֶת* by *θακίνθρος*. Cf. Ad. Schmidt, *Die griechischen Papyrusurkunden* (Berlin, 1842), p. 134.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Ritter, xvii. 1577. [Thomson, *Journey from Aleppo to Mt. Lebanon*, in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. v. p. 667.—*Cf.*]

*A list of places in the central and northern tribes from which the Canaanites were not driven out. The tribes when strong, make the Canaanites tributary; when weak, are content to dwell in the midst of them.*

# CHAPTER I. 27-36.

- 27 Neither did [And]<sup>1</sup> Manasseh [did not] drive out *the inhabitants* of Beth-shean and her towns [daughter-cities], nor Taanach and her towns [daughter-cities], nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns [daughter-cities], nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns [daughter-cities]; but the Canaanites would dwell [consented to dwell] in that land.
- 28 And it came to pass when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute [made the Canaanites tributary], and [but] did not utterly drive them out.
- 29 Neither<sup>2</sup> did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among<sup>3</sup> them. Neither<sup>4</sup> did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites dwelt among
- 31 them, and became tributaries. Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Acccho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of
- 32 Aphik, nor of Rehob: But the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out. Neither did Naphtali drive out
- 33 the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, nor the inhabitants of Beth-anath; but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: nevertheless, [and] the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and of Beth-anath became tributaries [were tributary] unto them.
- 34 And the Amorites forced [crowded]<sup>5</sup> the children [sons] of Dan into the mountain [mountains]: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley: But [And] the Amorite would dwell [consented to dwell] in mount Heres [,] in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim: yet [and] the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed [became
- 36 powerful], so that [and] they became tributaries [tributary]. And the coast [border] of the Amorites *was* [went] from the going up to Akrabbim, from the rock, and upwards [from Maahleh Akrabbim, and from Sela and onward].

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 27. — So Dr. Cassel. But the position of the verb at the beginning of the sentence suggests a contrast with what precedes: the House of Joseph took Luz; but drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean Manasseh (a member of the House of Joseph) did not do. Cf. next note. — Ta.]

[2 Ver. 29. — The  $\gamma$  here connects Ephraim with Manasseh, ver. 27: Ephraim also was guilty of not driving out. — Ta.]

[3 Ver. 29. —  $\text{בְּתוֹכָם}$ : lit. "in the midst of them." Cf. vers. 16, 21, 30, 32, 33. — Ta.]

[4 Ver. 30. — The "neither" ought to be omitted here and also in vers. 31 and 33. Manasseh and Ephraim are coupled together, cf. notes 1 and 2; but from this point each tribe is treated separately: "Zebulun did not drive out," etc. — Ta.]

[5 Ver. 34. —  $\text{וַיִּלְחָצוּ}$ : to press, to push. From this word Bachm. infers that Dan had originally taken more of B's territory than he now held. — Ta.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 27. And Manasseh did not drive out. The conquest of Luz was achieved by the two brother tribes conjointly. With the exception of this place, the lands allotted to them had for the most part been already conquered by Joshua. The portion of the half tribe of Manasseh lay about the brook Kanah (Nahr el-Akhdar).<sup>1</sup> A few cities, however, south of this brook, which fell to Ephraim, were made good to Manasseh by certain districts included within the borders of Asher and Issachar. This explains why Manasseh did not drive out the

<sup>1</sup> [On this identification of the brook Kanah, cf. Grove in Smith's *Bib. Dict.*, s. v. "Kananah, the River." — Ta.]

inhabitants of these districts. There were six townships of them, constituting three several domains, each of them inclosed in the lands of another tribe ( $\text{שְׁלֹשֶׁת הַנְּקֻדָּה$ , Josh. xvii. 11). The first of these was Beth-shean to the east; the second, the three cities Megiddo, Taanach, and Ibleam; the third, Dor on the sea-coast. The two former were inclosed within the tribe of Issachar; the latter should have belonged to the tribe of Asher. The districts thus given to Manasseh were valuable. Beth-shean (Greek, Seythopolis, at present Beisan) occupies an important position, and has a fertile soil. It formed a connecting link between the two seas, as also between the territories east and west of the

**Jordan**, and was a precious oasis<sup>1</sup> in the Ghôr, the desert-like valley of this stream. It was an important place in both ancient and later times. Esthor ha Parchi, the highly intelligent Jewish traveller of the 14th century, who made this place the central point of his researches, says of it: "It is situated near rich waters, a blessed, glorious land, fertile as a garden of God, as a gate of Paradise" (Berlin ed., pp. 1, 6; cf. Zuuz in Asher's *Benj. of Tudela*, ii. 401). The situation of the three cities Megiddo, Taanach, and Ibleam, in the noble plain of Jezreel, was equally favorable. Concerning the first, it is to be considered as established that it answers to the old Legio, the modern Lejjün (Rob. ii. 328; iii. 118); although I am not of the opinion that the name Legio, first mentioned by Eusebius and Jerome, is etymologically derived from Megiddo. It appears much more likely that Lejjün was an ancient popular mutilation of Megiddo, which subsequently in the time of the Romans became Latinized into Legio. Taanach is confessedly the present Ta'annuk (Schubert's *Reise*, iii. 164; Rob. ii. 316, iii. 117). The more confidently may I suggest the neighboring Jelameh as the site of Ibleam, although not proposed as such by these travellers.<sup>2</sup> Robinson reached this place from Jenin, in about one hour's travel through a fine country (*Bib. Res.* ii. 318 ff.). Dor<sup>3</sup> is the well-known Dandûra, Tantûra, of the present day, on the coast (Ritter, xvi. 608, etc. [Gage's transl. iv. 278]). Josh. xvii. 11 names Endor also, of which here nothing is said. The same passage affirms that "the sons of Manasseh could not (לֹא יָכְלוּ) drive out the inhabitants." Evidently, Manasseh depended for the expulsion of the inhabitants of these cities upon the coöperation of Issachar, by whose territory they were inclosed. The example of the tribes of Judah and Simeon, the latter of whom was entirely surrounded by the former, does not seem to have been imitated. Issachar is the only tribe concerning which our chapter gives no information. But since in the case of all the tribes, except Judah, only those cities are here enumerated out of which the Canaanites had not been expelled, the inference is that Issachar had done his part, and that the cities within his limits which did not expel their inhabitants, were just those which belonged to Manasseh. The statement that in Beth-shean, Megiddo, Taanach, and Ibleam the Canaanite remained, included therefore also all that was to be said about Issachar, and rendered further mention unnecessary. Issachar possessed the magnificent Plain of Jezreel (μέγα πεδιον), and was on that account an agricultural, peaceable, solid tribe. And the Canaanite consented to continue to dwell. Wherever וִילָחַץ occurs, it seems necessary to take it as expressing acquiescence in offered

proposals and conditions. In this sense it is to be taken Ex. ii. 21, where Moses consents to enter into the family of Jethro. Upon the proposals made by Micah to the Levite (Judg. xvii. 11), the latter consents to remain with him. David willingly acquiesces in the proposal to wear the armor of Saul, but finds himself as yet unaccustomed to its use. Manasseh was too weak to expel the inhabitants of these cities. He therefore came to an understanding with them. He proposed that they should peaceably submit themselves. Unwilling to leave the fine country which they occupied, and seeing that all the Canaanites round about had been overpowered, they acceded to the proposition.

Ver. 28. When Israel was strong, they made the Canaanite tributary. The narrator generalizes what he has said of Manasseh, and applies it to all Israel. The Canaanite, wherever he was not driven out, but "consented" to remain, was obliged to pay tribute. This lasted, of course, only so long as Israel had strength enough to command the respect of the subject people. Similar relations between conquerors and conquered are of frequent occurrence in history. The inhabitants of Sparta, the *Periaki*, were made tributary by the victorious immigrant Dorians, and even after many centuries, when Epaminondas threatened Sparta, were inclined to make common cause with the enemy (Manso, *Sparta*, iii. i. 167). According to Mohammedan law, the unbeliever who freely submits himself, retains his property, but is obliged to pay poll-tax and ground-rent (cf. Tornauv, *Das Mosl. Recht*, p. 51). When the Saxons had vanquished the Thuringian nobility, and were not sufficiently numerous to cultivate the land, "they let the peasantry remain," says the *Sachsenspiegel* (iii. 44), and took rent from them (cf. Eichhorn, *Deutsche Staats und Rechtsg.*, § 15). The treatment which the Israelitish tribes now extended to the Canaanites, was afterwards, in the time of their national decay, experienced by themselves (cf. my *History of the Jews* in Ersch & Gruber, II. xxvii. 7, etc.). The word כֶּסֶם, by which the tribute imposed is designated, evidently means ground-rent, and is related to the Sanskrit *mādmethor*, to measure. Another expression for this form of tribute is the Chaldee מִנְחָה (Ezra iv. 20), for which elsewhere מִנְחָה appears (Ezra iv. 13). The Midrash (*Ber. Rabba*, p. 57, a), therefore, rightly explains the latter as מִנְחָה דְּהָרֵץ, ground-rent. The terms *mensura* and *mensuraticum*, in mediæval Latin, were formed in a similar manner. The Arabic كَرْنَة, Talmudic כֶּרְנָה, also, as Hammer observes (*Länderverwaltung des Chalfats*, p. 119), mean tribute and corn.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Its magnificent position is also celebrated in the Talmud, *Erubin*, 19 a; cf. *Ketuboth*, 112 a. See below on ch. iv.

<sup>2</sup> [According to Bachmann, Knobel had already proposed this identification. Keil, after Schultz, suggests Khirbet-Belameh, half an hour south of Jenin.—Tr.]

<sup>3</sup> Levy (*Phönizische Inschriften*, i. 35) thought that he read this Dor on a Sidonian inscription together with Joppa. It is very doubtful whether he has found any one to agree with him.

<sup>4</sup> [On the derivation and radical idea of the word כֶּסֶם, opinions are very much divided. There is no unanimity even as to the usage of the word. Keil (on 1 Kgs. iv. 6, *Einb.* ed. 1857) asserts that it "nowhere signifies vertigal, tribute, or socage, but in all places only serf or socager."

But the better view seems to be that although it is some times used concretely for socagers or bond-servants, (cf. 1 Kgs. v. 27 (13)), yet its proper and usual meaning is tribute-service. Out of the twenty-three instances in which the word occurs, there is not one in which it can be shown that it means tribute in money or products; while it is abundantly evident that in many cases it does mean compulsory labor, personal service. What kind of service the Israelites here required of the Canaanites does not appear. It may have been labor on public works, or assistance rendered at certain times to the individual agriculturist. This appears at least as probable as Bachmann's suggestion that perhaps "the Canaanite merchants" were expected to furnish certain "commercial supplies and services." Our author's view in favor of "ground-rent," cannot be said to derive the support of analogy from his historical references. For as Bachmann



[But did not drive them out. BERTHEAC: "וְלֹא-דָרְשׁוּם": the emphatic expression by means of the infinitive before the finite verb, we regard as indicative of an implied antithesis; but, although Israel, when it became strong, had the power to execute the law of Moses to destroy the Canaanites, it nevertheless did not destroy them."

-TR.]

Ver. 29. And Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanite that dwelt in Gezer. The situation of Gezer may be exactly determined from Josh. xvi. 3. The border of Ephraim proceeds from Lower Beth-horon, by way of Gezer, to the sea. Now, since the position of Beth-horon is well ascertained (Beit 'Ur et-Tatha), the border, running northwest, past Ludd, which belonged to Benjamin, must have touched the sea to the north of Japho, which likewise lay within the territory of Benjamin. On this line, four or five miles east of Joppa, there still exists a place called Jesôr (Jazour Yazûr), which can be nothing else than Gezer, although Bertheac does not recognize it as such (p. 41; nor Ritter, xvi. 127 [Gage's Transl. iii. 245]). It is not improbable that it is the Gazara of Jerome (p. 137, ed. Parthey), in *quarto milliaris Nicopolos contra septentrionem*, although the distance does not appear to be accurately given. The *Ganzur* of Esthor ha-Parchi (ii. 434), on the contrary, is entirely incorrect. The position of Gezer enables us also to see why Ephraim did not drive out the inhabitants. The place was situated in a fine, fertile region. It is still surrounded by noble corn-fields and rich orchards. The agricultural population of such fruitful regions were readily permitted to remain for the sake of profit, especially by warlike tribes who had less love and skill for such peaceful labors than was possessed by Issachar.

Ver. 30. Zebulon did not drive out the inhabitants of Kitron nor the inhabitants of Nahalol. This statement will only confirm the remarks just made. There is no reason for contradicting the Talmud (*Meqilla*, 6 a), when it definitely identifies Kitron with the later Zippori, Sepphoris, the present Seffûrieh. As the present village still lies at the foot of a castle-crowned eminence, and as the Rabbinic name Zippori (Tzip-pori, from צִפּוֹר, "a bird, which hovers aloft") indicates an elevated situation, the ancient name קִטְרוֹן (from קִטָּר=קָטַר) may perhaps be supposed to describe the city as the "mountain-crown" of the surrounding district. The tribe of Zebulon, it is remarked in the Talmud, need not commiserate itself, since it has Kitron, that is, Sepphoris, a district rich in milk and honey. And in truth Seffûrieh does lie on the southern limit of the beautiful plain el-Buttauf, the present beauty and richness of which, as last noted by Robinson (ii. 336), must formerly have been much enhanced by cultivation. In connection with this, it will also be possible to locate Nahalol more definitely. Philologically, it is clearly to be interpreted "pasture" (Isa. vii. 19). It answers perhaps to the later

Abilin, a place from which a wady somewhat to the northwest of Seffûrieh has its name. For this name comes from *Abel*, which also means pasture. This moreover suggests the explanation why from just these two places the Canaanites were not expelled. They both became tributary, and remained the occupants and hailiffs of their pastures and meadows.

Vers. 31, 32. Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Aecho, Zidon, Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, Rehob. The whole history of Israel can be nothing else than a fulfilling of the spirit of the Mosaic law. The division of the land of Canaan is a part of this fulfillment. This division therefore cannot have respect only to the territory already acquired, but must proceed according to the *promise*. The boundaries of the land destined for Israel were indicated by Moses. The territories which they circumscribe must be conquered. Whatever part is not gained, the failure is the fault of Israel itself. The boundaries indicated, were the outlines of a magnificent country. Splendid coast-lands, stately mountains, wealthy agricultural districts, rich in varieties of products and beauty, inclosed by natural boundaries. The whole sea-coast with its harbors—Phœnicia not excepted—was included; the northeastern boundary was formed by the desert, and lower down by the river. The border lines of the land of Israel, drawn Num. xxxiv., are based upon the permanent landmarks which it offers; they are accurate geographical definitions, obtained from the wandering tribes of the land. It seems to me that it is only from this point of view that the hitherto frequently mistaken northern boundary of the land, as given Num. xxxiv. 7-9, can be correctly made out. "And this shall be your north border," it is there said: "from the great sea ye shall take Mount Hor as your landmark; thence follow the road as far as Hamath; and the border shall end in Zedad: thence it goes on to Ziphron,<sup>1</sup> and ends in Hazarenan." The range of Mount Casius, whose southernmost prominence lifts itself up over Laodicea (the present Ladikieh), forms the natural northern boundary of Phœnicia. This is the reason why on coins Laodicea was called אֶם בִּנְנֹן, the "Beginning of Canaan," as it might be translated. It is therefore also from the foot of this range that the northern boundary of Israel sets out. The name Mount Hor is simply the ancient equivalent of Mount Casius and also of the later Jebel Akra, which latter term furnishes a general designation for every mountain since the Greek Akra was explained by the Arabic *Jebel*. From the foot of this mountain ancient caravan roads (suggested by לָבַת הַקָּרָה) lead to Hamath, and from Hamath to the desert. At present, as in the time of the geographer Ptolemy, who indicated their course, these roads pass over Zedad, at the western entrance of the desert, the modern *Sudud* (Ritter, xvi. 5 [Gage's Transl. iii. 175]; xvii. 1443, etc.). Thence the border went southward till it ended in Hazarenan, the last oasis, distinguished by fertile meadows and good water (*Enan*), where the two Zifran) wide-spread ruins are yet existing. According to my inquiries, the place lies fourteen hours N. E. of Damascus, near the Palmyra road. It has not yet, I think, been visited by any traveller. It is impracticable here to enter into further geographical discussions, but the opinion of Kell (on Num. xxxiv. 7-9), who rejects the above determination, cannot be accepted as decisive, if for no other reason on account of the general idea by which he is evidently influenced.

Justly remarks, "the case in which the conquerors of a country leave the earlier population in possession of their lands on condition of paying ground-rent, is the *reverse* of what takes place here, where a people, themselves agriculturists, take personal possession of the open country, and enclose a few cities to the old inhabitants." It is probable, however, that the situation varied considerably in different localities, cf. ver. 31 f. and ver. 34. — TR.]

<sup>1</sup> Wetzstein (*Hauran*, p. 88) writes: "Of Ziphron (Arab.



principal roads from Damascus and Haleb to Palmyra meet, and where the proper Syrian desert in which Palmyra (Tadmor) is situated begins. The name *Cehere* on the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, Zoaria (for the Goaria of Ptolemy), at present Carietein, Kuryetein (Ritter, xvii. 1457, etc.), may remind us of Hazor.

Tadmor itself did not lay beyond the horizon of Israelitish views. Whithersoever David and Solomon turned their steps, they moved everywhere within the circle of original claims. Israel was not to conquer in unbridled arbitrariness; they were to gain those districts which God had promised them. *Conquest*, with them, was *fulfillment*. The eastern border has the same natural character. From Hazar-eenan it runs to Shepham, along the edge of the desert to Riblah (the present Riblah) "on the east side of Ain" (Rob. iii. 534), along the range of Antilebanon, down the Jordan to the Dead Sea. These remarks it was necessary to make here where we must treat of the territories of Asher and Naphtali, the northwestern and northeastern divisions of Israel. For it must be assumed that Asher's territory was considered to extend as far up as Mount Hor, — that the whole coast from Aecho to Gabala was ascribed to him. This coast-region Asher was not sufficiently strong and numerous to command. The division of the land remained ideal nowhere more than in the case of the Phœnician cities. Nowhere, consequently, was the remark of ver. 32 more applicable: "the Asherite dwelt among the inhabitants of the land;" whereas elsewhere the Canaanites dwelt among Israel, though even that was against the Mosaic commands. Nor can it be supposed that the seven cities expressly named were the only ones out of which Asher did not expel the Canaanites. For who can think that this had been done in the case of Tyre, the "fortified city" (Josh. xix. 29)? The names are rather to be considered as those of townships and metropolitan cities, so that when Zidon is mentioned other cities to the south and north are included as standing under Sidonian supremacy. The express mention of Tyre, in Josh. xix. 29, is due to the fact that the passage was giving the course of the boundaries. For the same reason, Joshua xix. is not a complete enumeration of places; for of the seven mentioned here, two at least (Aecho and Ahlah) are wanting there. That Aecho cannot have been accidentally overlooked, is evident from the fact that the border is spoken of as touching Carmel, and that mention is made of Achzib. The relation of Asher to the Phœnician territory was in general the following: A number of places (Josh. xix. 30 speaks of twenty two) had been wholly taken possession of by the tribe. Outside of these, the Asherites lived widely scattered among the inhabitants, making no attempts to drive them out. The seven cities mentioned above, especially those on the coast, are to be regarded as districts in which they dwelt along with the Canaanites. We have no reason for confining these to the south of Sidon. On the contrary, Esthor ha-Parchi (ii. 413-415) was right in maintaining that cities of the tribe of Asher must be acknowledged as far north as Laodicea. The statements in Joshua for the most part mention border-places of districts farther inland, in which the tribe dwelt, and from which the boundary line ran westward to the sea. Thus, at one

time the line meandered (פָּנָה) to Zidon (xix. 28); then it came back, and ran toward Tyre (ver. 29). Not till the words, "the ends were at the sea,

מִחֶבֶל אֲחִיזִיב," do we get a sea-boundary from north to south. I translate this phrase, "from Chebel towards Achzib;" it includes the whole Phœnician tract. True, the whole enumeration implies that *most* of the places lay farther south than Zidon, in closer geographical connection with the rest of Israel. But places higher up are also named, for the very purpose of indicating the ideal boundaries. Among these are the places mentioned ver. 30, two of which again appear in our passage. Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Aecho (Ptolemais, the present Akka), but dwelt among them. To the north of this was Achzib (Edippa, the present ez-Zib). They dwelt with the inhabitants of Zidon in their dominion. They did not expel the inhabitants of Aphik (Apheca), on the Adonis river (Ritter, xvii. 553, etc.), notwithstanding the ancient idolatry there practiced, on account of which, evidently, it is mentioned. Rehob, since it is here named, must have been a not unimportant place. The Syrian translation of Rehob is פֶּלְטִירָא, *paltia*, *paltusa* (*plata*). This accounts for the fact that the Greeks and Romans speak of an ancient Paltos, otherwise unknown (Ritter, xvii. 890), and of which the present Beldeh may still remind us. Hitherto, this has escaped attention. It was remarked above that the sea-boundary is drawn, Josh. xix., "from Chebel to Achzib." With this Chebel the חֶבֶלָה (Chelbah, E. V. Helbah),

probably to be read חֶבְלָה (Cheblah), of our passage, may perhaps be identified. It is the Gabala of Strabo and Pliny, the Gabellum of the crusaders, the present Jebel, which lies to the north of Paltos, and below Laodicea, and in Phœnician times was the seat of the worship of the goddess Thuro (Ritter, xvii. 893; Movers, ii. 1, 117 ff.). There is but one of the seven cities of which we have not yet spoken, namely, Ahlah, named along with Achzib. It is very probable that this is Giscala, situated in the same latitude with Achzib, but farther inland. In Talmudic times the name of this place was Gush Chaleb; at present there is nothing but the modern name el-Jish to remind us of it.

Ver. 33. Naphtali did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath. The names of both these places allude to an idolatrous worship, and are also found in the tribe of Judah. The name of Beth-anath (בֵּית עֲנָת),

"House of Echo," from עָנָה, "to answer," indicates that its situation was that of the present Baniās, the ancient Paneas. The inscriptions on the grotto called Panium, still point to the echo. One of them is dedicated to the "echo-loving" (φιλεσὺχος) Pan. The love of Pan for the nymph Echo was a widely-spread myth. Another inscription tells of a man who dedicated a niche (κόγχη) to the Echo (Commentary on *Setzen's Reisen*, iv. 161, 162). The introduction in Greek times of Pan worship in Baniās, is moreover also explained by the fact that the name Bethanas (th), required only an easy popular corruption to make it Paneas

1 The Targum also translates פֶּלְטִירָא by רֶחֶב, not only when used as a common noun (cf. Buxtorf, *Lex.*

*Chald.*, p. 1740), but also in proper names, as Rehoboth Gen. x. 11.

Robinson (*Bib. Res.* iii. 409) has again taken up the view, already rejected by Ritter (xvii. 229), which identifies Paneas with the repeatedly occurring Baal-gad, and which on closer inspection is simply impossible. Joshua xi. 17 says of Baal-gad that it lay in the *Bikath* (בִּקְעָה) Lebanon, under Mount Hermon. Joshua xii. 7 speaks of it simply as Baal-gad in the *Bikath Lebanon*. The valley thus spoken of is none other than the Buka'a, *i. e.* "Hollow Syria." There is no other hollow region that could be thus indicated. The further determination *tachath har Chermon* indicates, quite consistently with the meaning of *tachath*, which frequently combines the signification of "behind" with that of "under," the Lebanon valley behind Mount Hermon, *i. e.* on the northern base of Hermon, for on its southern base there can be no Lebanon valley. This alone would suffice to transfer Baal-gad to the Buka'a. But in Joshua xiii. 5 a Lebanon is spoken of "east of Baal-gad under Mount Hermon." Now, a Lebanon east of Baal-gad there can be only if Baal-gad lies in the Buka'a; and there being a Lebanon on the east, only the northern base of Mount Hermon can be meant by the phrase "under Mount Hermon" (cf. below, on ch. iii. 3). Now, although there ought to be no doubt that Baal-gad lay in the "Hollow," yet, the addition "under Mount Hermon" cannot have been made without a reason. It was intended to distinguish *Baal-gad* from *Baal-bek*, which latter, since it lies in the northern part of the Buka'a, could not properly be said to lie on the northern base of Hermon. We scarcely need to hesitate, therefore, to recognize in Baal-gad the position of the later Chalcis (*ad Libanum*) whose site is marked by fountains and temple ruins. "The temple which stands on the summit of the northernmost hill, belongs evidently to an older and severer style of architecture than those at Baalbek. Its position is incomparable" (Ritter, xvii. 185; Rob. iii. 492, etc.).

Besides the inhabitants of Beth-anath, the tribe of Naphtali failed to drive out those of Beth-shemesh also. There was a celebrated place of the same name in Judah, and still another, unknown one in Issachar. Concerning the tribe of Naphtali also the remark is made that they dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land. Their assigned boundaries likewise went far up to the north. They inclosed Cælo-Syria, as was already remarked. The peculiar mode in which Beth-shemesh is here spoken of, along with Beth-anath, is doubtless intended to point it out as a remarkable seat of idol worship, whose people nevertheless Israel did not expel, but only rendered tributary. The most celebrated place of the north was the temple-city in the "Hollow," — Beth-shemesh, as later Syrian inhabitants still called it, — Baalbek as we, following the prevailing usage of its people, Heliopolis as the Greeks, named it. The Egyptian Heliopolis also bore the name Beth-shemesh, House of the Sun. Baalbek answers to the name Baalath,<sup>1</sup> to which, as to Tadmor, Solomon extended his wisdom and his architecture.

Vers. 34, 35. And the Amorite crowded the sons of Dan into the mountains. The domains of the tribe of Dan lay alongside of those of Benja-

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kgs. ix. 15. Others refer this to Baalath in the tribe of Dan. Cf. Keil to Joshua xix. 44, and on 1 Kgs. ix. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the Syrian שלבית, "anfractus inter duos montes." Cf. Castelli, p. 912.

<sup>3</sup> [BACHMANN: "That the House of Joseph used its greater strength not to exterminate the Amorite cities, but only to

min, between Judah on the south and Ephraim on the north. They should have reached to the sea; but the warlike dwellers on the western plain, provided with the appliances of military art, had resisted even Judah. The plain which we are here told the sons of Dan could not take, seems to have been the magnificent and fertile Merj Ibn Omeir, which opens into the great western plain. This may be inferred from the remark in ver. 35: "The Amorite consented to remain on Mount Heres, in Ajalon, and in Shaalbim." This plain, as Robinson (iii. 144) accurately observes, reaches to the base of the steep mountain wall, on the top of which Sâris is the first place met with. It must be this mountain land that is meant by Mount Heres. Southward of it is the ridge on which Yâlo lies, which is justly considered to be the ancient Ajalon. Perhaps no place answers more closely to the Shaalbim of our passage, than Amwâs (Emmaus, Nicopolis), twenty minutes distant from the conical Tell Latrôr. It is evident that שַׁעֲלָבִים has nothing to do with שַׁעֲלָל, "fox," but belongs to the Chaldaic שַׁלֵּב, "to connect," שַׁלְבִּין "steps,"<sup>2</sup> to which the Hebrew שַׁלֵּב corresponds. The position of Amwâs is "on the gradual declivity of a rocky hill," with an extensive view of the plain (Rob. iii. 146), "where," as Jerome says, "the mountains of Judah begin to rise." When Jerome speaks of a tower called Selebi, he probably refers to the neighboring castle Latrôn.

The sons of Dan were not only unable to command the plain, but also on some points of the hill-country they suffered the inhabitants to remain.

Har Heres (הַר הֶרֶס) means the "mountain of the Sun;" but the attempts to bring its position into connection with Ain Shems cannot succeed, since that lies much farther south, in the valley. Heres was the name of the mountain chain which at Beth-horon enters the territory of Ephraim, and on which Joshua was buried. Possibly, the name Sâris or Soris contains a reminiscence of it. This explains the remark, that "the hand of the sons of Joseph became powerful and made the Amorites tributary." That which was impossible for the tribe of Dan, Ephraim from their own mountains performed.<sup>3</sup>

Ver. 36. The border of the Amorite remained from the Scorpion-terrace, from Sela and onward. This peculiar statement is explained by the composition of the whole tableau presented by the first chapter. It had been unfolded how far the tribes of Israel had performed the task appointed by Moses, by taking the territories whose borders he had indicated. For this reason, it had been stated concerning all the tribes, what they had not yet taken, or had not yet wholly nationalized. Neither the eastern, nor the northern and western boundaries had been hitherto fully realized. Only the southern border had been held fast. This line, as drawn Num. xxxiv. 3 ff., actually separated Israel and the heathen nations. Ver. 36 is, as it were, a citation from the original Mosaic document. After beginning the sentence by say-render them tributary, thus benefiting itself more than the tribe of Dan, sets forth the unsatisfactory nature of their assistance, and conveys a just reproach. Meanwhile, however, it seems that the subjugation of the Amorite by the House of Joseph was so far at least of use to Dan as to enable them to reach the coast, in partial possession of which, at least, we find the tribe in ch. v. 17." But cf. our author in loc. — Tr.]

ing "and the border of the Amorite went from Akrahbim and Sela," it is brought to a sudden close by the addition **וְעַד־כֵּלָעַיִם**, "and onward," because it is taken for granted that the further course of the border to the "Brook of Egypt" is known from the determinations of Moses as recorded in Numbers. There it was said, "Your border shall go to the south of Maaleh Akrahbim (at the southern extremity of the Dead Sea), pass through Zin, and its end shall be to the south of Kadesh-barnea." Here, the statement is somewhat more exact, inasmuch as the border is prolonged from Akrahbim eastward to Sela, *i. e.* Petra. From Akrahbim westward it proceeds along the already indicated route, over Kadesh-barnea, Hazar-addar, and Azmon, to the "Brook of Egypt" (Wady el-Arish, Rhinocorura). This course the writer deemed sufficiently indicated by the words "and onward."<sup>1</sup>

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Obedience and love toward God are wrecked on greediness and love of ease. Immediately after the death of Joshua, the children of Israel asked after God. But very soon they ceased to do that which Moses, and, in his name, Joshua had commanded them. Their business was to conquer, and not to tremble at strongholds or chariots of iron. They were to expel, and not to take tribute. But their heart was no longer entirely with their God. They

<sup>1</sup> [The foregoing paragraph, rendered somewhat obscure by its brevity, was explained by the author, in reply to some inquiries, as follows: "I endeavored to show that the idea of the passage is, that the original boundary lines of Israel, as drawn by Moses, had nowhere been held against the Amorite, *i. e.* the original inhabitants, except only in the south. Everywhere else, the inhabitants of Canaan, especially the Amorite, had thus far prevented the Israelites from taking full possession of the land; but in the south the boundary between Israel and the Amorite remained as drawn by Moses, in Num. xxiv. 3. I would ask that in connection with this the remarks under vers. 31, 32, be considered. The whole first chapter is an exposition of the fact that Israel had not yet attained to complete possession of Canaan. It is a spiritual-geographical picture of what Israel had not yet acquired, and what nevertheless it should possess." In other words, Dr. Cassel's idea is, that the main thought of ch. i. may be expressed in two sentences: 1. On the west, north, and east Israel did not actually realize the assigned boundary lines between itself and the original inhabitants — the term Amorite being used in the wider sense it sometimes has. Cf. Gage's Ritter, ii. 125. 2. On the south, the Mosaic line was made good, and continued to be held. The first of these sentences is expressed indirectly, by means of illustrative instances, in vers. 4-35; the second, by direct and simple statement, in ver. 36. In that verse, the narrative which in ver. 9 set out from Judah on its northward course, returns to its starting-point, and completes what might be called its tour of boundary inspection, by remarking that the southern boundary (known as southern by the course ascribed to it) corresponded to the Mosaic determinations. Ver. 36, therefore, connects itself with the entire previous narrative, and not particularly with vers. 34, 35.

This explanation labors, however, under at least one very serious difficulty. It assumes that in the expression "border of the Amorite," the gen. is an adjective gen., making the phrase mean the Amoritish (Canaanitish) border, just as we speak of the "Canadian border," meaning the border of the U. S. over against Canada. But in expressions of this kind, the gen. is always the genitive of the possessor, so that the border of the Amorite, Ammonite, etc., indicates the boundary of the land held by the Amorite, Ammonite, etc. It seems necessary, therefore, with Bertheau, Keil, Bachmann, etc., to read this verse in connection with vers. 34, 35, and to find in it a note of the extent of territory held by the Am-

forget, not only that they were to purify the land, and alone control it, but also why they were to do this. They were indulgent to idolatry, because the worm was already gnawing at their own religion. They no longer thought of the danger of being led astray, because they were unmindful of the word which demanded obedience. Perfect obedience is the only safe way. Every departure from it leads downhill into danger.

Thus we have it explained why so many undertakings of Christians and of the church fail, even while the truth is still confessed. The word of God has not lost its power; but the people who have it on their tongues do not thoroughly enter into its life. The fear of God is still ever the beginning of wisdom; but it must not be mixed with the fear of men. Preaching is still ever effective; but respect to tribute and profitable returns must not weaken it. Perfect obedience has still ever its victory; but that which does not belong to God comes into judgment, even though connected with Christian matters. Israel still confessed God, though it allowed the tribes of Canaan to remain; but nominal service is not enough. When confession and life do not agree, the life must bear the consequences.

STARKE: We men often do not at all know how to use aright the blessings which God gives, but abuse them rather to our own hurt. — THE SAME: Our corrupt nature will show mercy only there where severity should be used, and on the other hand is altogether rough and hard where gentle-

orite. The question then arises, how it is to be explained. We take for granted that the Maaleh Akrahbim of this verse is the same as that in Num. xxiv. 4 (a line of cliffs, a few miles below the Dead Sea, dividing the Ghôr from the Arabah, see Rob. ii. 129), and is not, as some have thought, to be sought in the town Akrahbeh, a short distance S. E. of Nâbulus (Rob. iii. 296). The other point mentioned is

**הַפֶּלֶעַ**, the Rock. Commentators generally take this to be Petra, in Arabia Petraea; but the difficulties in the way of this view are insurmountable. In the first place we never hear of Amorites (take it in the wider or narrower sense) so far south as Petra, in the midst

of the territories of Edom. In the next place, **מִצְלָע** means upward, *i. e.* under the geographical conditions of this verse, northward (Dr. Cassel's *onward*, *i. e.* downward to the sea, could scarcely be defended). Now, a line running from Akrahbim to Petra, and thence northward, would merely return on its own track, and would after all leave the Amorite territories undefined on just that side where a definition was most needed because least obvious, namely, the southern. It seems, therefore, altogether preferable (with the Targ., Kurtz, *Hist. O. Cov.* iii. 239, Keil, and Bachm.) to take

**הַפֶּלֶעַ** as an appellative, and to find in it a second point for a southern boundary line. Kurtz and Keil identify it with "the (well-known) rock" at Kadesh (the Kudea of Rowlands, cf. Williams, *Holy City*, i. 463 ff.), from which Moses caused the water to flow, Num. xx. 8. Bachmann prefers the "bald mountain that ascends toward Seir" (Josh. xi. 17), whether it be the chalk-mountain Madurah (Rob. ii. 179), or, what he deems more suitable, the northern wall of the Azâzimât mountains, with its masses of naked rock. In the vast confusion that covers the geography of this region, the most that can be said, is, that either view would serve this passage. In either case we get a line running from Akrahbim on the east to a westerly direction. From this southern boundary the Amorite territories extended "upwards."

But when? Manifestly not at the time of which ch. i. treats, cf. ver. 9-19. The statement refers to the time before the entrance of Israel into Canaan, and is probably intended to explain the facts stated in vers. 34, 35, by reminding the reader of the originally vast power of the Amorite. It was not to be wondered at that an enemy once so powerful and widely diffused should still assert his strength in some parts of his former domain. (Cf. Bachmann — Ta.)

ness might be practiced. — **THE SAME**: Self-conceit, avarice, and self-interest can bring it about that men will unhesitatingly despise the command of God. When human counsels are preferred to the express word and command of God, the result is that matters grow worse and worse.

[**SCOTT**: The sin [of the people in not driving]

out the Canaanites] prepared its own punishment, and the love of present ease became the cause of their perpetual disquiet.

**HENRY**: The same thing that kept their fathers forty years out of Canaan, kept them now out of the full possession of it, and that was unbelief. — [**TR.**]

## SECOND SECTION.

**THE RELIGIOUS DEGENERACY OF ISRAEL WHICH RESULTED FROM ITS DISOBEDIENT CONDUCT WITH RESPECT TO THE CANAANITES, AND THE SEVERE DISCIPLINE WHICH IT RENDERED NECESSARY, AS EXPLAINING THE ALTERNATIONS OF APOSTASY AND SERVITUDE, REPENTANCE AND DELIVERANCE, CHARACTERISTIC OF THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES.**

*A Messenger of Jehovah charges Israel with disobedience, and announces punishment  
The people repent and offer sacrifice.*

### CHAPTER II. 1-5.

1 And an angel [messenger] of the Lord [Jehovah] came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up<sup>1</sup> out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with  
2 you. And [But] ye shall make no league [covenant] with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down<sup>2</sup> their altars: but ye have not obeyed [hearkened to] my  
3 voice: why have ye done this?<sup>3</sup> Wherefore [And] I also said, [In that case — *i. e.* in the event of disobedience]<sup>4</sup> I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as  
4 thorns in your sides,<sup>5</sup> and their gods shall be [for] a snare unto you. And it came to pass, when the angel [messenger] of the Lord [Jehovah] spake [had spoken]<sup>6</sup> these words unto all the children [sons] of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and  
5 wept. And they called the name of that place Bochim [weepers]: and they sacrificed there unto the Lord [Jehovah].

#### TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 1. — אֵלֶּיָּהָ, **KEL**: "The use of the imperfect instead of the perfect (cf. ch. vi. 8) is very singular, seeing that the contents of the address, and its continuation in the historical tense (אָמַרְתִּי and אָמַר), require the preterite. The imperfect can only be explained by supposing it to be under the retrospective influence of the immediately following imperfect consecutive." De Wette translates, "I said, I will lead you up out of Egypt, and brought you into the land," etc. This supposes that אָמַרְתִּי, or some such expression, has dropped out of the text, or is to be supplied. This mode of explaining the imperfect is favored (1), by the fact that we seem to have here a quotation from Ex. iii. 17; but especially (2), by the אֵלֶּיָּהָ before the last clause of this verse, and the אָמַרְתִּי of ver. 3, which suggest that the same verb is to be understood in ver. 1 a. — **TR.**]

[2 Ver. 2. — הִתְהַרְסוּ, from נָהַרַס, to tear down, demolish. On the form, cf. Ges. *Gram.* § 47, Rem. 4. — **TR.**]

[3 Ver. 2. — More literally: "What is this that ye have done!" *i. e.* How great is this sin you have committed! cf. ch. viii. 1. — **TR.**]

[4 Ver. 3. — Dr. Bachmann interprets the words that follow as a definite judgment on Israel, announcing that henceforth Jehovah will not drive out any of the still remaining nations, but will leave them to punish Israel. It is undoubtedly true that אָמַרְתִּי אֲנִי may be translated, "therefore, now, I also say;" but it is also true that it is more natural here (with Bertheau, Keil, Cass.) to render, "and I also said." To the citations of earlier divine utterances in vers. 1. c (see the Comment.), the messenger of Jehovah now adds another, from Num. xxxiii. 55, Josh. xxiii. 13. It is, moreover, a strong point against Bachmann's view that God does not execute judgment speedily, least of all on Israel. We can hardly conceive him to shut the door of hope on the nation so soon after the departure of the latest surviving contemporaries of Joshua as this scene at Bochim seems to have occurred, cf. the comparatively mild charges brought by the messenger, as implied in ver. 2, with the heavier ones in ver. 11 ff. and ch. iii. 6, 7. Besides, if we understand a definite and final sentence to be pronounced here, we must understand ch. ii. 20 f. as only reproducing the same (as Bachmann does), although

Israel's apostasy had become far more pronounced when the first Judge arose than it is now. It seems clear, therefore that we must here understand a warning, while the sentence itself issues subsequently (cf. foot-note 3, on p. 62). — Tr.]

[5 Ver. 3. — Dr. Cassel translates: "they shall be to you for thorns." Cf. the Commentary. The E. V. supplies "thorns" from Num. xxxiii. 55; but it has to change לַצִּדִּים into צִדִּים or צִדִּים. — Tr.]

[6 Ver. 4. — Better perhaps, with De Wette: "And it came to pass, as the messenger of Jehovah spake, etc., that the people," etc. On צ with the infin. cf. Ges. *Lez.* s. צ, B. 5, b. — Tr.]

#### EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 1. And there came a messenger of Jehovah. Israel had experienced the faithfulness of the Divine Spirit who, through Moses, led them forth from Egypt, and made them a people. In him, they conquered Canaan, and took possession of a noble country. In addition to this, they had the guaranty of the divine word (cf. Lev. xxvi. 44), that God would never forsake them — that the truth on which He had thus far built up their life and nationality, would endure. Reason enough had been given them to fulfill everything prescribed by Moses, whether great or small, difficult or pleasant, whether it gave or took away. They had every reason for being wholly with their God, whether they waged war or enjoyed the fruits of victory. Were they thus with Him? Could they be thus with Him after such proceedings in relation to the inhabitants of Canaan as ch. i. sets forth? Israel's strength consists in the enthusiasm which springs from faith in the invisible God who made heaven and earth, and in obedience to his commands. If enthusiasm fail and obedience be impaired, Israel becomes weak. The law which it follows is not only its rule of duty, but also its bill of rights. Israel is free, only by the law; without it, a servant. A life springing from the law, exhibited clearly and uninterruptedly, is the condition on which it enjoys whatever is to its advantage. To preserve and promote such a life, was the object of the command, given by Moses, not to enter into any kind of fellowship with the nations against whom they were called to contend. The toleration which Israel might be inclined to exercise, could only be the offspring of weakness in faith (Deut. vii. 17) and of blind selfishness. For the sake of its own life, it was commanded not to tolerate idolatry within its borders, even though practiced only by those of alien nations. For the people are weak, and the superstitious tendency to that which strikes the senses, seduces the inconstant heart. It cannot be otherwise than injurious when Israel ceases to be entirely obedient to that word in whose organic wisdom its history is grounded, and its future

secured. Ruin must result when, as has been related, the people falls in numerous instances to drive out the heathen nations, and instead thereof enters into compacts with them. Special emphasis was laid, in the preceding narrative, upon the fact that for the sake of tribute, Israel had tolerated the worship of the lewd Asherah and of the sun, in Apheca, in the Phœnician cities, in Banias, and in Beth-shemesh. When the occupation of Canaan was completed — a date is not given — the impression produced by a survey of the whole land was not such as promised enduring peace and obedience to the Word of God. The organs of this word were not yet silenced, however. When the heads of Israel asked who should begin the conflict, the Word of God had answered through the priest; and ancient exegesis rightly considered the messenger of God who now, at the end of the war, speaks to Israel, to be the same priest. At the beginning, he answered from the Spirit of God; at the end, he admonishes by an impulse of his own. There he encourages; here he calls to account. There "they inquire of God;" here also he speaks only as the "messenger of God." He is designedly called "messenger of God." Every word he speaks, God has spoken. His words are only reminiscences out of the Word of God. His sermon is, as it were, a lesson read out of this word. He speaks only like a messenger who verbally repeats his commission. No additions of his own; objective truth alone, is

what he presents. That is the idea of the מַלְאָךְ, the messenger, ἄγγελος, according to every explanation that has been given of him. The emphasis falls here, not on who spake, but on *what* was spoken. God's word comes to the people unasked for, like the voice of conscience. From the antithesis to the opening verse of the Book, where the people asked, it is evident that no angel of a celestial kind is here thought of. Earlier expositors ought to have perceived this, if only because it is said that the messenger —

Came up from Gilgal to Bochim. Heavenly angels "appear," and do not come from Gilgal particularly.<sup>1</sup> The connection of this statement

<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, Keil also, *in loc.*, has followed the older expositors. [We subjoin the main points on which Keil rests his interpretation: "מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה" is not a prophet or any other earthly ambassador of Jehovah, as Phinehas or Joshua (Targ., Rabb., Stud., Berth., and others), but the Angel of Jehovah, consubstantial with God. In simple historical narrative no prophet is ever called מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה; such are designated מַלְאָךְ or מַלְאָךְ, as in ch. vi. 8, or מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה, 1 Kgs. xii. 22, xiii. 1, etc. The passages, Hag. i. 13 and Mal. iii. 1, cannot be adduced against this, since there, in the prophetic style, the purely appellative significance of מַלְאָךְ is placed beyond all doubt by the context. Moreover, no prophet ever identifies himself so entirely with God, as is here done by the Angel of Jehovah, in his address vers 1-3. The prophets always distinguish themselves from Jehovah by this, that they introduce their utterances as the word of God by the formula "thus saith Jehovah," as is also done by the prophet in ch. i. 8. Nor does it conflict with the nature of

the Angel of Jehovah that he comes up from Gilgal to Bochim. His appearance at Bochim is described as a coming up to Bochim, with as much propriety as in ch. vi. 11 it is said concerning the Angel of Jehovah, that "he came and sat down under the terebinth at Ophra." The only feature peculiar to the present instance is the coming up "from Gilgal." This statement must stand in intimate connection with the mission of the angel — must contain more than a mere notice of his journeying from one place to another." Keil then recalls the appearance to Joshua, at Gilgal, of the angel who announced himself as the "Captain of the host of Jehovah," and promised a successful issue to the siege of Jericho. "The coming up from Gilgal indicates, therefore, that the same angel who at Gilgal, with the fall of Jericho delivered all Canaan into the hands of the Israelites, appeared to them again at Bochim, in order to announce the divine decree resulting from their disobedience to the commands of the Lord." With this view Bachmann and Wordsworth also agree. It must be admitted, however, that the appearance of the Angel of Jehovah, or indeed of any angel, in the character of a preacher before the assembled congregation of Israel is without a parallel in sacred history. Keil's supposition that he addressed the people only through their

with the whole preceding narrative is profound and instructive. The history of Israel in Canaan begins in Gilgal. There (Josh. iv. 20 ff.) stood the memorial which showed how they had come through the Jordan into this land (אֶרֶץ חֲמָתָם). The name Gilgal itself speaks of the noblest benefit bestowed on them — their liberation from the reproach of Egypt. There the first Passover in Canaan had been celebrated. Thence also begin the great deeds that are done after the death of Joshua. As now the messenger of God comes from Gilgal, so at first Judah set out from thence to enter into his possessions. A messenger who came from Gilgal, did by that circumstance alone remind the people of Joshua's last words and commands. The memorial which was there erected rendered the place permanently suggestive to Israel of past events. From the time that Joshua's camp was there, it never ceased to be a celebrated spot (comp. 1 Sam. vii. 16); but that on this occasion the messenger comes from Gilgal, has its ground in the nature of his message, the history of which commences at Gilgal.

Vers. 2, 3. **Why have ye done this?** This sorrowful exclamation is uttered by the priest — according to Jewish exegesis, Phinchas, the same who spoke ch. i. 2 — after he has exhibited in brief quotations from the old divine instructions, first, what God has done for Israel, and then what Israel has done in disregard of God. The eternal God has enjoined it upon you, not under any circumstances to enter into peaceful compacts with the idolatrous tribes and their altars among you, thereby authorizing them openly before your eyes to manifest their depravity and practice their abominations — what have ye done! The exclamation is full of sharp grief; for the consequences are inevitable. For God said (Josh. xxiii. 13): "I will not drive out these nations from before you." Israel had its tasks to perform. If it failed it must bear the consequences. God has indeed said (Ex. xxiii. 29, 30), and Moses reiterates it (Deut. vii. 22), "By little and little I will drive out the Canaanite, lest the land become desolate." And this word received its fulfillment in the days of Joshua and subsequently. But when Israel disobeys, God will not prosper its disobedience. It must then experience that which the messenger now with grief and pain announces: Since Canaanites remain among you, who ought not to remain, and whom ye could have expelled, had ye been wholly with your God (Deut. vii. 17 ff.), they will hurt you, though they are conquered. *It is not an innocent thing to suffer the presence of sin, and give it equal rights.*

They shall be thorns, and their gods shall be a snare unto you. The Hebrew text has יְהִי לָכֶם לְעֵצִים: literally, "they shall be sides unto you." עֵץ everywhere means "the side;" and the explanations which make "adversaries, hosts" (Vulgate), "nets" (Luther), "tormentors" (Sachs), out of it, are without any foundation. Arias Montanus, who gives in *lateribus*, follows therein the older Jewish expositors; but neither does the idea of "hurtful neighbors" lie in

the word. From the fact that the Chaldee paraphrast has מְעִיָּוִת, "oppressors," it would indeed seem that he read עֵצִים; for in Num. xxxiii. 55 he also renders עֵצִים by מְעִיָּוִת. The Septuagint rendering συνοχάς (the Syriac version of it has the singular, cf. Rödham, p. 69), might seem to indicate a similar reading, although συνέχειν occurs perhaps only twice for עֵצִים (1 Sam. xxi. 8; 2 Sam. xx. 3). None the less does it appear to me to be against the language and spirit of Scripture, to read עֵצִים here. For not only does עֵצִים occur but once in Scripture (Lam. i. 7), but it is expressive of that hostility which arises in consequence of the state of things here described. Only after one has fallen into the snare begins that miserable condition in which one is *oppressed* by the enemy, while all power of resistance is lost. The following considerations may assist us to arrive at the true sense: Every sentence, from ver. 1 to ver. 4, is in all its parts and words a reproduction of utterances by Moses and Joshua. Verse 1 is composed of expressions found as follows:

עֵצִים, etc., Ex. iii. 17; יְהִי לָכֶם, etc., Josh. xxiv. 8; דִּשְׁבַּעְתִּי, etc., Deut. i. 35; לֹא יָצָר, etc., Lev. xxvi. 44. Verse 2 likewise: לֹא הִתְקַדְּרִי, etc., Ex. xxiii. 32, Deut. vii. 2; מְזַדְּדוֹתֵיהֶם, etc., Ex. xxxiv. 13, Deut. vii. 5; לֹא שָׁמַעְתֶּם, etc., Num. xiv. 22. The case is similar with ver. 3, and it is to be assumed that the parallel passages may be used to throw light on the text. Now, as the first parallel to the expression, "and they shall be to you for *tsiddim* (עֵצִים)," we have the words in Num. xxxiii. 55: "and they shall be to you for pricks in your eyes and thorns in your sides (לְעֵינֵיכֶם וּלְצִדֵּיכֶם)." Not for "sides," therefore, but for "thorns in the sides;" and we can as little believe that the same meaning would result if the expression were only "sides," as we can imagine the idea to remain unaltered if instead of "pricks in the eyes," one were to say, "they shall be to you for eyes." The second parallel passage is Josh. xxiii. 13: they shall be to you for "scourges in your sides and thorns in your eyes." The enemies are compared, not with "sides" and "eyes," but with scourges and thorns by which sides and eyes are afflicted. Now as our passage as a whole corresponds entirely with those of Numbers and Joshua, save only that it abridges and epitomizes them, the threat which they contain appears here also, and in a similarly condensed form. It was sufficient to say, "they shall be to you for thorns;" accordingly, instead of עֵצִים we are to read צִנִּים

(*tsinnim* for *tsiddim*), a change as natural as it is easily accounted for, since both words occurred not only in each of the other passages, but in one of them were joined together in the same clause. Emendation in this instance is more conservative than retention, for it rests on the internal organic coherence of Scripture.<sup>1</sup> *Tsinnah, tsinnim, tsennim,*

heads or representatives, is against the clear import of vers. 4, 5, and not to be justified by a reference to Josh. xxiv. 1, 2. Besides, an assembly of the heads and representatives, presents the same difficulty as an assembly of all the people. Angels appear only to individuals; to Israel as a nation God speaks through prophets. — Tr.]

<sup>1</sup> [Bachmann is not inclined to admire the "conservative" character of this emendation. He holds to the reading of the text, and finds in it a free reference to Num. xxxiii. 55 and Josh. xxiii. 13, by virtue of which "the nations themselves" — for, in his view, the צִנִּים (ver. 3) refers

are thorns, *spine*, pointed and stinging. The figure is taken from rural life. Israel, in the conquest, has acted like a slothful gardener. It has not thoroughly destroyed the thorns and thistles of its fields. The consequence will be, that sowing and planting and other field labors, will soon be rendered painful by the presence of spiteful thorns. What will turn the Canaanites into stinging weeds and snares for Israel? The influence of habitual intercourse. Familiarity blunts aversion, smooths away contrarities, removes differences, impairs obedience. It induces forgetfulness of what one was, what one promised, and to what conditions one is subject. Familiar intercourse with idolaters will weaken Israel's faith in the invisible God who has said, "Thou shalt not serve strange gods."

Ver. 4. When the messenger had spoken these words, etc. It is most likely that the few sentences here given, are but the outlines of the messenger's address. But every word rests on the basis of instructions delivered by Moses and Joshua. The people are sensible of the surpassing reality of the blessings which they have received, and for that reason are the more affected by the thought of the consequences which their errors have brought upon them. For the fulfillment of the law of truth as to its promises, guarantees the same as to its threatenings. Their alarm on account of sin is the livelier, the less decidedly active their disregard of the Word of God has hitherto been. They have not yet served the gods whose temples they have failed to destroy — have not yet joined in sin with the nations whom they suffered to remain. It was a weak faith, but not yet full-grown sin, by which they were led astray. God's messenger addresses "all the sons of Israel," for no tribe had formed an exception. In greater or less degree, they all had committed the same disobedience. The whole nation lifted up its voice and wept.

Ver. 5. And they called the name of the place *Bochim* (Weepers). The messenger of the divine word, when he wished to address Israel, must have gone up to the place where he would find them assembled. Israel had been commanded, as soon as the Jordan should have been crossed, and rest obtained, to assemble for feasts and sacrifices at a sacred place (Deut. xii. 10). This order applied not to Jerusalem merely, but to "the place which the Lord your God shall choose in one of the tribes." Thither they are to go up, trusting in God and dismissing care. It was only at such festal assemblies that Israel could be met. There was the opportunity for preaching and admonition. The chosen place at that time was Shiloh. There the tabernacle had been set up (Josh. xviii. 1); and there the people assembled (cf. Josh. xxi. 2). Thither they went up from far and near, to attend festivals (Judg. xxi. 19), and to offer sacrifices (1 Sam. i. 3). The whole progress of Joshua was a going from Gilgal to Shiloh. Accordingly, the messenger of God can have found Israel at no other place. His discourse produced a general outburst of weeping (cf. 1 Sam. xi. 4). And only because it was a weeping of penitence and shame before God, did the place where it occurred receive and retain the name *Bochim*. It was not a place otherwise nameless. How could the place where such an assembly was held be without a name! And how could it occur to the people to assemble

rather to the nations of the unconquered border districts (cf. ch. ii. 23, iii. 1), than to the scattered remnants of Canaanites within the conquered territories — "as described as *sides* for Israel, i. e. as cramping, burdensome, tormenting neighbors." But is it quite "conservative" to attach the

at such a place! In Shiloh itself, some spot — perhaps that where the priest was accustomed to address the people — received the name *Bochim*. This name served thenceforth to recall the tears which were there shed. So do they show to-day in Jerusalem the "Jews' weeping-place" (El Ebra, Ritter, xvi. 350 [Gage's Transl. iv. 50]), where every Friday the Jews pray and lament. "And they offered sacrifices there." After *repentance and reconciliation comes sacrifice*.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Faith and repentance come from preaching. God's messenger preaches, and Israel hears. The people acknowledge their sins, and weep. At that time only a divine admonition was needed to make them sacrifice again to their God. To fall is possible even for one who has received so much grace as Israel had experienced in the lifetime of Joshua and after his death; but he rises up as soon as the messenger of God touches his heart with the preaching of repentance. A generation which experienced divine miracles, and recognized them as divine, can be brought to repentance by that miracle which in the proclamation of the word of God addresses the souls of men.

Therefore, let not the preaching of repentance fail to address all the people. But the preacher must be (1), a messenger of God; and (2), must not shun the way from Gilgal to *Bochim*, — must not wait till the people come to him in the place for preaching, but must go to them, until he find a *Bochim*, a place of tearful eyes. But as God's messenger he must give heed that the weeping be not merely the result of affecting words, but of a penitent disposition; that it be called forth, not by the flow of rhetoric, but by memories of the grace of God hitherto experienced by the congregation.

STARKE: How great concern God takes in the salvation of men, and especially in the welfare of His church, appears clearly from the fact that He himself has often reasoned with them, taught them, admonished and rebuked them.

THE SAME: The Word of God has the power of moving and converting men.

THE SAME: To attest our repentance by tears as well as reformation, is not improper; nay, repentance is seldom of the right sort, if it does not, at least in secret, weep for sin.

GERLACH: He reminds them of earlier commands, promises and threats, and shows them how their own transgressions are now about to turn into self-inflicted judgments. The people, however, do not proceed beyond an unfruitful sorrow in view of this announcement.

[HENRY: Many are melted under the word, that harden again before they are cast into a new mould.

SCOTT: If transgressors cannot endure the rebukes of God's word and the convictions of their own consciences, how will they be able to stand before the tribunal of the holy, heart-searching Judge.

THE SAME: The worship of God is in its own nature joy, praise, and thanksgiving, and our crimes alone render weeping needful; yet, considering what we are and what we have done, it is much idea of something cramping, etc., to the simple word "side," which on no other occasion appears with such horrible suggestions of compression and suffocation as Dr. B. would give it here? — TA.]



to be wished that our religious assemblies were more frequently called "Bochim," the place of the weepers. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

WORDSWORTH. The Israelites called the place Bochim; they named it from their own tears. They laid the principal stress on their own feelings, and on their own outward demonstrations of sorrow. But they did not speak of God's mercies; and they were not careful to bring forth fruits of

repentance; they were a barren fig-tree, having only leaves. Their's was a religion (such as is too common) of sentiment and emotions, not of faith and obedience.

THE SAME: Reproofs which produce only tears — religious feelings without religious acts — emotions without effects — leave the heart worse than before. If God's rebukes are trifled with, His grace is withdrawn. — Tr.]

*An extract from the Book of Joshua showing when and through what occasion the religious apostasy of Israel began.*

## CHAPTER II. 6-10.

- 6 And when [omit: when] Joshua had [omit: had] let the people go, [and] the children [sons] of Israel went every man unto his inheritance, to possess [to take possession of] the land. And the people served the Lord [Jehovah] all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived<sup>1</sup> Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord [Jehovah], that he did for Israel. And Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord [Jehovah], died, *being* an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border [district] of his inheritance in Timna h-heres, in the mount [mountains] of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill [north of Mount] Gaash. And also all that generation were gathered unto their father:<sup>2</sup> and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord [Jehovah], nor yet the works<sup>3</sup> which he had done for Israel.

[1 Ver. 7. — *וַיִּחְיֶה יְמָיו*, to prolong one's days, usually means, "to live long;" but here the addition "after Joshua" shows that the expression is not to be taken in this ordinary acceptance, but according to the proper sense of the words: "they prolonged days (life) after Joshua," i. e. they survived him: not, "they lived long after Joshua," cf. the remarks of Bachmann quoted on p. 15. — Ta.]

[2 Ver. 10. — The sing. suff. in *וַיָּבֹרְכוּ*, although the verb is plural, arises from the fact that the expression *וַיָּבֹרְכוּ* and others of like import, are generally used of individuals. Habit gets the better of strict grammatical propriety. — Ta.]

[3 Ver. 10. — Dr. Cassel: *die Gott nicht kannten, und [also] auch seine That nicht*; i. e. "who knew not God (Jehovah), nor [consequently], the works." The explanation of this rendering is that he takes "knew" in the sense of "acknowledge," see below; so that the clause gives him the following sense: "they acknowledged not what God had done for them, and of course did not rightly value his works. But, as Bachmann observes, *לֹא יָדָעוּ* conveys no reproach, but only states the cause of the ensuing apostasy. The new generation did not know the Lord and his work, sc. as eye witnesses (cf. ver. 7, iii. 2); they only knew from hearsay." — Ta.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Vers. 6-8. The penitence of the people at Bochim had shown that it had not yet fallen from its obedience to God, that it was still conscious of the blessings which had been bestowed upon it. The promise made to Joshua (Josh. xxiv. 24) had as yet been kept. They still served the Lord. Their position in this respect was the same as when he dismissed the tribes to take possession of their several inheritances. This dismissal introduced Israel to the new epoch, in which it was no longer guided by Moses or Joshua. Hence, the insertion of these sentences, which are also found in Josh. xxiv., is entirely appropriate. They describe the whole period in which the people was submissive to the Word of God, although removed from under the direct guidance of Joshua. The people was faithful when left to itself by Joshua, faithful after

his death, faithful still in the days of the elders who outlived Joshua. That whole generation, which had seen the mighty deeds that attended the conquest of Canaan, stood firm. Our passage says, "for they had *seen*," whereas Josh. xxiv. 31 says, "they had *known*," "To see" is more definite than "to know." The facts of history may be known as the acts of God, without being witnessed and experienced. But this generation had stood in the midst of the events; the movements of the conflict and its results were still present in their memories. Whoever has felt the enthusiasm inspired by such victories and conquests, can never forget them. The Scripture narrators are accustomed, like the chroniclers of the Middle Ages, to repeat literally what has already been said elsewhere, in cases where modern writers content themselves with a mere reference. While we should have deemed it sufficient to appeal to earlier histories for an account



of the death of Joshua, the narrative before us takes the more accurate method of literal repetition. Hence, the interruption of the course of thought commenced vers. 1-5, is only apparent. Vers. 6-10 explain the pious weeping of the people which vers. 4 and 5 recorded. Joshua's death, age, and burial are mentioned, because the writer wishes to indicate that Israel served God, not only after its dismissal by the still living leader, but also after his decease. The less necessity there was for the statements of vers. 8 and 9, the more evident it is that they are borrowed from Josh. xxiv. And we may congratulate ourselves that by this means the name of the place where Joshua was buried, has been handed down to us in a second form.

Ver. 9. And they buried him in Timnath-heres, in the mountains of Ephraim, north of Gaash. In Josh. xxiv. 30, the place is called

Timnath-serah (תִּמְנַת סֶרַח). The most reverential regard for the Masoretic text will not refuse to acknowledge many variations in the names of places, arising especially from the transposition of letters (as תִּמְנַת and תִּמְנַת Josh. xix. 29).<sup>1</sup> Jewish tradition, it is true, explains them as different names borne by the same place; but the name Cheres is that which, in Kefr Cheres, preserved itself in the country, as remarked by Esthor ha-Parehi (ii. 434) and other travellers (Carmoly, pp. 212, 368, 444, etc.). Eli Smith discovered the place, April 26, 1843. A short distance northwest of Bir-Zeit (already on Robinson's earlier map, cf. the later), near Wady Belat, "there rose up a gentle hill, which was covered with the ruins or rather foundations of what was once a town of considerable size." The spot was still called Tihneh (for Timnah, just as the southern Timnath is at present called Tibneh). The city lay to the north of "a much higher hill, on the north side of which (thus facing the city), appeared several sepulchral excavations."<sup>2</sup> No other place than this can have been intended by the Jewish travellers, who describe several graves found there, and identify them as those of Joshua, his father, and Caleb (Carmoly, p. 387). The antiquity of the decorations of these sepulchres may indeed be questioned, but not that of the sepulchres themselves. Smith was of opinion that hitherto no graves like these had been discovered in Palestine. Tibneh lies on the eastern side of Mount Ephraim, the same side on which, farther south, Beth-horon and Sâris are found. "Mount Heres," which not the tribe of Dan, but only the strength of Ephraim, could render tributary, must have lain near Sâris, east of Aijalon. It is evident, therefore, that the name Heres must have been borne by this whole division of the mountains of Ephraim; and that the Timnath in which Joshua was buried, was by the addition of Heres distinguished from other places of the same name. In this way, the peculiar interest which led Ephraim to administer justice on Mount Heres (cf. on ch. i. 35) explains itself.

Ver. 10. And also all that generation, etc. Time vanishes. One generation goes, another comes. Joshua, who had died weary with years, was followed into the grave by his younger contemporaries. The generation that had borne arms with him, had been buried in the soil of the promised land; and another, younger generation lived,

It had already grown up in the land which the fathers had won. It inherited from them only possession and enjoyment. It already felt itself at home in the life of abundance to which it was born. It could not be counted as a reproach to them that they had not *seen* the mighty works of God in connection with the conquest (hence it is not said לֹא רָאוּ); but in the triteness of possession they utterly failed to acknowledge (לֹא יָדְעוּ) their indebtedness for it to God. How Israel came into the land, they must indeed have known; but to "know Jehovah" is something higher. They did not acknowledge that it was through God that they had come thither. Their fathers had seen and felt that victory and freedom came to them from the Lord. But they, as they did eat, built goodly houses, and dwelt in them (Deut. viii. 12), forgot God, and said (Deut. viii. 17): "Our power and the might of our hands hath gotten us this wealth." Modern German history furnishes an instructive illustration. The generation which broke the yoke of servitude imposed by Napoleon, "felt their God," as E. M. Arndt sang and prayed. The succeeding age enjoys the fruits and says: "Our skill and arms have smitten him." The living enthusiasm of action and strength, feels that its source is in the living God. It looks upon itself as the instrument of a Spirit who gives to truth and freedom their places in history. The children want the strength which comes of faith in that Spirit who in the fathers accomplished everything—and want it the more, the less they have done. Everything foretold by Moses goes into fulfillment. The later Israel had forgotten (Deut. viii. 14) what God had done for their fathers—in Egypt, in the desert, in Canaan. The phraseology is very suggestive; they "knew not Jehovah, nor, consequently, the works which he had done for Israel." Among the people, the one is closely connected with the other, as is shown by what follows.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

One generation goes and another comes, but the word of God abides forever. It holds good for fathers and children; it judges ancestors and descendants. The new Israel had not beheld the deeds of Joshua and Caleb; but the God in whose spirit they were accomplished, still lived. They had not witnessed the recompense which was visited upon Adoni-bezek; but the Word which promises reward and punishment, was still living. Israel apostatized not because it had forgotten, but because sin is ever forgetful. When the blind man sins, it is not because he does not see the creation which God created, but because sin is blind both in those who see and in those who see not.

Therefore, no one can excuse himself, when he falls away into idolatry. Creation is visible to all, all have come up out of Egypt, all enjoy the favor of their God. Inexperience, satanic arts of temptation, temperament, can explain many a fall; yet, no one falls save by his own evil lusts, and all wickedness is done before the eyes of God (ver. 11).

STARKE: Constantly to remember and meditate on the works of God promotes piety, causing

<sup>1</sup> As תִּמְנַת and תִּמְנַת, and תִּמְנַת and תִּמְנַת. Cf. Bochart, *Hierozoicon*, lib. I. cap. xx. tom. 2, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> Ritter xvi. 562, Gage's Transl. iv. 246; [Smith's "Visit to Antipatriis," in *Bibliotheca Sacra* for 1843 (published at New York) p. 434 — Tr.] On the desire of the Ben-Jadins to be buried on mountains, cf. Wetzstein, *Hauran*, p. 26.

us to fear God, to believe in Him, and to serve Him. mighty works of God continued alive, so long also did active gratitude, covenant faithfulness, endure.

Lisoo: As long as the remembrance of the

*The apostasy of Israel during the period of the Judges: Idolatry and its consequences.*

CHAPTER II. 11-15.

- 11 And the children [sons] of Israel did evil<sup>1</sup> in the sight of the Lord [Jehovah], and  
 12 served Baalim: And they forsook the Lord [Jehovah. the] God of their fathers,  
 which brought them out of the land of Egypt [Mitsraim], and followed other gods, of  
 the gods of the people [peoples] that *were* round about them, and bowed themselves  
 13 unto them, and provoked the Lord [Jehovah] to anger. And [Yea] they forsook the  
 14 Lord [Jehovah], and served Baal and Ashtaroth. And the anger of the Lord  
 [Jehovah] was hot [kindled] against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands  
 of spoilers that [and they] spoiled them, and he sold them [gave them up<sup>2</sup>] into the  
 hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before  
 15 their enemies. Whithersoever [Wheresoever]<sup>3</sup> they went out, the hand of the  
 Lord [Jehovah] was against them for evil [disaster], as the Lord [Jehovah] had said,  
 and as the Lord [Jehovah] had sworn unto them: and they were [became] greatly  
 distressed.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

Ver. 11. — עָוֹן: lit. "the evil." The use of the article, however, scarcely warrants the stress laid on it by Dr.

Cassel (see below), as עָוֹן, although most frequently used of idolatry, occurs also of sin in general and of other sins  
 Num. xxxii. 13; 2 Sam. xii. 9; Ps. li. 6. The art. is probably used here as with other words denoting abstract ideas,  
 Gen. Gr. § 109, Rem. 1, c. — Tr.]

[2 Ver. 14. — BACHMANN: "The giving up to the enemy is represented as a selling. The term of comparison, however,  
 the price received, but the complete surrender into the stranger's power." — Tr.]

[3 Ver. 15. — The E. V. takes כָּל־מְקוֹם = כָּל־מָשָׁר, and מָשָׁר as the accus. whither, cf. Num. xiii. 27. So also  
 Cassel, Keil, and most versions and commentators. Dr. Cassel takes מָשָׁר as accus. where, as in Gen. xxxv. 13,  
 2 Sam. vii. 7. Dr. Bachmann thinks it safer "in accordance with 2 Kgs. xviii. 7 (cf. Josh. i. 7, 9), to understand the  
 whole expression not of the place of the undertaking, but of the undertaking itself (cf. Deut. xxviii. 20): כָּל־

מְשָׁרָהּ, with ver. 19: . . . כָּל־מְשָׁרָהּ: lit. "in all what = for what  
 they went out," i. e. (since the connection points to matters of war) in all undertakings for which they took the field.  
 It is at least safe to say that 2 Kgs. xviii. 7 requires this interpretation of the phrase in question, cf. Thénien *in loc.* —  
 Tr.]

EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Vers. 11-13. And they did the evil in the sight of Jehovah. In what the evil consisted, we are soon informed: they served other gods, not their God. These other gods of the nations round about them, are national gods. They severally represent the morals, inclinations, and aptitudes, of those nations. The heathen god is the embodiment of the spiritual life and character of the people that worships him. The God of Israel is the very opposite of this. He is the God of the universe, inasmuch as He created heaven and earth; and the God of Israel, inasmuch as He elected them from among the nations in order to be a holy people unto Himself. The law is the abstract representation of that divine morality which is characteristic of the holy nation, as such. Israel forsakes God, when it does not follow this law. It forgets God, when it ascribes to itself that which belongs to Him; when it explains the history of its wars and victories by referring them, not to divine

guidance, but to its own strength. Hence also, as soon as Israel forgets God as the author of its history, it falls into the service of other gods, since these are the opposite of the absolute God, namely, the visible embodiment of the nation's own self. The God of Israel is a God on whom the people feels itself dependent; the heathen deity, with its material representation, is the resultant of the popular will. The very moment in which the impatient Israel of the desert forsook God, it worshipped the golden calf, the type of Egypt. Now, in Canaan also, Israel is induced to forget God as its benefactor. It seeks to remove the contrariety which exists between itself and the Canaanites: to cancel the dividing-lines drawn by the law of the invisible God. It can have fellowship with the other nations only by serving their gods. Among the nations of antiquity no leagues found place except on the basis of community in sacred things: for in these the national type or character expressed itself. In the Italian cities, a union for joint-sacrifices was called *concilium*, and formed the

indispensable prerequisite to *connubium* and *commercium*. The children of Israel, for the sake of their neighbors, forget their God. To please men, they do "the evil in the sight of the Lord." Evil, רע, is the opposite of what God wills. Whatever the laws forbids, is "evil." "Ye shall not worship strange gods," is the burden of the first, and the ultimate ground of all commandments. Therefore, when Israel serves them it does what is, not simply "evil," but "the evil" (רע). The trains of thought of the simple sentences, are bound together by a profoundly penetrating logic. The new generation no longer knows the works of God in Israel's behalf. Hence it longs for intercourse with the nations round about. For these have not been driven out. In order to gratify this longing, it serves their strange gods. But thereby it forsakes Jehovah, and provokes Him to anger.

And they served Baalim. Baal (בעל), as deity, is for the nation, what as master he is in the house, and as lord in the city. He represents and impersonates the people's life and energies. Hence, there is one general Baal, as well as many Baalim. The different cities and tribes had their individual Baalim, who were not always named after their cities, but frequently from the various characteristics for which they were adored. The case is analogous to that of Zeus, who by reason of his various attributes, was variously named and worshipped in Greece. The Israelites, as they forgot their own God, apostatized to that form of Baal service which obtained in the tribe or city in which they happened to live, according to the manifold modifications which the service of the idol assumed. Our passage reproduces very closely the words of the Mosaic law (cf. Deut. xvii. 2, 3; xxix. 25 (26)), except that it substitutes Baalim for *elohim acherim*, other gods. *Elohim acherim* is of universal comprehensiveness. "Other gods" being forbidden, the false gods of all ages and countries, whatever names they may bear, are forbidden. *Acher* is "another," not in any sense implying coördination, but as expressive of inferiority, spuriousness. It is used like *ἕτερος*, *posterior*, and the German *after* and *aber*. (*Aberglaube* [superstition] is a false *glauhe* [faith], just as *elohim acherim* are false gods.) Baalim is here substituted as being the current name of the country for the false god. And in truth the very name of Baal, in its literal signification, expresses the contrast between him and the absolute and true *Elohim*, Jehovah. For as Baal (i. e. Lord, Master), he is dependent on the existence of him whose Baal he is, just as he is no husband who has not a wife; whereas it is the nature of the absolute God to be perfectly free and independent of every extraneous object. These Baalim were the "gods of the nations who dwelt round about them." Every word of ver. 12 indicates that what now occurred, had been foretold by Moses (cf. Deut. xxviii. 20; xxxi. 16; Lev. xxii. 33). The chief passages which are kept in view, are Deut. vi. 10 ff.; xxix. 25 ff. Ver. 13 begins with the same words as ver. 12, "they forsook God," not to repeat but to strengthen the statement. It must astound the reader that they have

forsaken God (פָּרַץ) has the sense of our expression "to ignore one," "not to notice him," as one lets a poor man stand and beg without noticing him), to serve "Baal and Ashtaroth." Israel, the narrator wishes to say, was actually capable of giving up its own glorious God, who brought it up out of Egypt, for the sake of Baal and Ashtaroth! The statements of vers. 11, 12, 13, and 14 form a climax; for sin is not stationary, but sinks ever deeper. Ver. 11 had said that "they served Baalim." Ver. 12 intimates that this was in fact nothing else than that which Moses, in the name of God, had described as the deepest and most radical crime of which the nation could be guilty. Ver. 13 shows the blindness of Israel in its deepest darkness. The people has forsaken its God of truth and purity, for the sake of Baal and Ashtaroth! That has come to pass against which Deut. iv. 19 warned as possible: "Lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, shouldst bow down to them and serve them." The luminaries of the heavens are the original symbols of ancient idolatry. Baal answers to Zeus, the Greek Light-god. Ashtaroth, in like manner, corresponds to Hera (according to the meaning of her name, a Baalah), the Star-queen. Ashtoreth means "the star" (שֵׁתָרֶת, Persian *sitareh*, *αστήρ*, star); in the plural her name is Ashtaroth. This plural expresses the Scripture phrase "host of heaven," in one collective conception. As *Elohim* in its plural form represents the Deity, so Baalim represents Baaldom, and Ashtaroth the shining night-heavens.

(Just as *cives* and *civitas*, צִיבִי and צִיבִיָּה, are used to express all that is included in the idea of the State.) The Greek form of Ashtoreth, it is well known, was Astarte. Hence, names formed like Abdastartus<sup>2</sup> (Servant of Astarte), find their contrast in such as Obadiah (Servant of Jah), formed in the spirit of the Israelitish people. Astarte represents on the coast of Phœnicia the same popular conception, suggested by natural phenomena, which till a very late period Asia Minor worshipped in the goddess of Ephesus. The Greek conceptions of Hera, Artemis, and Aphrodite do not so coalesce in her as to prevent us from clearly finding the common source. From the instructive passages of Scripture, in which the language shows a relation of Astarte to the propagation of flocks (Deut. vii. 13; xxviii. 4), it is evident that as luminous night-goddess she, like Hera, was a patroness of corporeal fertility, an Ilithyia, Lucina, Mylitta. On account of this idea, which is characteristic of both goddesses, the heavenly Hera (*Juno caelestis*) coincides with Aphrodite Urania, so that Hesychius remarks concerning Belthis (Baalath), that she may be the one or the other. Astarte was worshipped as Ashtoreth, not only in Zidon (1 Kgs. xi. 5; 2 Kgs. xxiii. 13), but throughout Canaan; special mention is made of her temple in Askelon (1 Sam. xxxi. 10). It is evidently this temple of which Herodotus (i. 105) speaks as dedicated to Aphrodite Urania, and which, as the national sanctuary of Askelon, the Scythians destroyed. It was on account of its national charac-

1 Cf. my *Abhandlung über Wissensch. und Akademien*, p. cxviii.

2 Compare Methuastartus (מתוששתרת), formed like Methubaal, Methusalem, Man of (belonging to) Astarte. Compare אמעשתרת, "my mother is Astarte," on the

Sidonian Inscription of Eshmunazar. Rödiger (*Zeitschrift. d. d. m. Ges.*, 1855, p. 656) regards it as an abbreviation for אמעשתרת, "maid-servant of Astarte," wherein he is followed by others.

ter, that the Philistines deposited in it the armor of Saul as trophies. They saw in its goddess the victor over the defeated enemy, just as at Ephesus the repulse of the Cimmerians was attributed to the aid of Artemis. Powers of resistance and defense were ascribed to all those Asiatic goddesses who presided over the principle of fecundity in nature. Their weapons protect pacific nature and that which she cherishes, against the hostility of wild and savage forces. The worship of the Ephesian goddess is founded and celebrated by Amazons. Juno, the celestial, is represented with lance in hand. The same conception is indicated by ancient representations of Aphrodite, in which she appears armed and prepared for battle. Astarte is at all events considered favorable to her nation in war, since trophies of victory hang in her temple, and the capital of the terrible warrior Og bears the name Ashtaroth (Josh. ix. 10; xii. 4). This King Og of Bashan is regarded as a scion of the mighty Rephaim. These latter have their seat at Ashtaroth Karnaim, where they are attacked by the eastern kings (Gen. xiv. 5). Ashtaroth Karnaim points to the horns of the crescent moon, by which also Astarte of Askalon is indicated on the coins of that city (cf. Stark, *Gaza*, p. 259). The armed Aphrodite in Sparta is the same with Helena or Selene, the moon-goddess, — a fact clearly demonstrative of her identity with Astarte. Moon and stars, the luminaries of the night-sky, are blended in Ashtaroth. She represents the collective host of heaven. Before this "host" Israel bowed down when it forsook its "Lord of hosts." Baal and Ashtaroth stand for the whole national worship of Phœnicia, over against Jehovah, the God of the universe. They are the representatives of their nation's prosperity; and it is therefore a profound conception, which Epiphanius says some held (*Hæres.* iv. cap. 2), which makes Hercules (Baal) to be the father, and Ashtaroth (or Asteria, *ἡ Ἀστέρια*), the mother, of Melchizedek. Thus when Melchizedek bowed himself before Abraham and Abraham's God, the national spirit of Canaan submitted itself. When Israel prostrates itself before such symbols, it cannot fail to provoke the anger of its God.

Ver. 14. And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel. A climax appears also in the expressions concerning the displeasure of God. First, that which they do is evil in his sight (ver. 11); then, they provoke Him to anger (ver. 12; cf. Deut. iv. 25; ix. 18); finally, his anger is kindled (ver. 14; also Num. xxv. 3; xxxii. 13).

And He delivered them into the hands of the oppressors [spoilers] — and gave them up into the hands of their enemies.<sup>1</sup> Thus far the phraseology has been literally quoted from Mosaic utterances, except that Baal and Ashtaroth were substituted for sun, moon, and stars. The above words occur here for the first time. They express the historical consequences of Israel's wrong-doing. When Israel forsakes God and his law, it loses the basis of its nationality. With God and God's law, and through them, it is a people; without them, it has neither law nor national power. The gods after whom they run, do not at all belong to them. On the contrary, they are the property of nations — who are their enemies. Israel left Egypt a crowd

of slaves. It was God's own revelation of Himself fulfilling his promise to the fathers, that made it free. If it give up this revelation, it has no longer a basis of freedom. Freedom is henceforth impossible; for by serving the gods of other nations, it dissolves its own national existence. Hence, this faithlessness towards God, is the worst folly against itself. For the enemy who gave way before Israel's God and Israel's enthusiasm, will no longer spare the conquerors of Canaan when, like men without character, they kneel at strange altars. When God who elected Israel is not in the midst of the nation as its protector, it is like the defenseless hart which the hunter pursues. Such is the figure which underlies the expression: "and God gave them into the hands of their לְיָדֵי." The root

לָכַז, לָכַז, is not found in the Pentateuch, and occurs here for the first time. The *shosim* are enemies of the property of another, robbers, plunderers, — as the hunter robs his game of life and happiness. The word is kindred to the Greek *χάζω*, with the same meaning, although, to be sure, only the passive *χάζομαι* is in use. (It seems also that the Italian *cucciare* and the French *chasser* are to be derived from this word; but cf. Diez, *Lex. der Röm. Spr.*, p. 79). Israel, having broken its covenant with God for the sake of men, was by these very men oppressed. They robbed it of goods and freedom. For God had "sold it," like a person who has lost his freedom. What but servitude remained for Israel when it no longer possessed the power of God? It cannot stand before its enemies, as was foretold, Lev. xxvi. 37, in somewhat different words. A people that conquered only through the contrariety of its spirit with that of its enemies, must fall when it ceases to cherish that spirit. No one can have power to succeed, who himself destroys his sole vocation to success. Hence, Israel could no more be successful in anything. The measure of its triumph with God, is the measure of its misery without Him. Apostasy from God is always like a return to Egypt into bondage (Deut. xxviii. 68).

Ver. 15. As Jehovah had said, and as he had sworn unto them. By applying to their sin the very words used in the law, the narrator has already emphasized the enduring truthfulness of the divine announcements. Israel is to experience that everything threatened comes to pass; and with reason, for every promise also has been verified. But here he expresses himself still more plainly. The hand of the Lord (Deut. ii. 15) was against them for evil (Deut. xxix. 20), as He "had sworn unto them." No sentence evinces more plainly how closely the narrator keeps to the Mosaic writings. When God is said to swear unto Israel, it is almost always in connection with blessings to be bestowed. Only in two instances (Deut. ii. 14; cf. Josh. v. 6), the Lord is represented as having sworn that to those who had not obeyed his voice, He would not show the land. In these, therefore, the oath is confirmatory of threatened punishment. The double form of expression also, that God spake and swore, is prefigured Deut. xxix. 12 (13).

And they became greatly distressed, וַיִּכְרַח. Deut. xxviii. 50-52 describes the plunderers, who

<sup>1</sup> [On these words Bachmann remarks: "This does not describe a twofold visitation, either simultaneous or successive: first spoiling, then servitude (P. Mart.), or roving robber bands and regular hostile armies (Schm.); still less (Cajet.) a three-fold degree of calamity — spoiling, slavery, blight [the

latter indicated by ' they were no longer able to stand before their enemies ' — Ta.]; but God in abandoning the people to the resistless violence of their hostile neighbors, does thereby deliver them into the hands of the spoilers." — Ta.]

shall rob them of their cattle and their harvests. "Thou shalt be distressed in all thy gates" (תָּיִשָּׁרֵר לְךָ), is twice repeated in ver. 52. The narrator presupposes intimate acquaintance with the ancient writings, and therefore cites only their salient points.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

After the judgment of the word comes the judgment of the sword. He who ceases to remember the works of God, ceases also to enjoy the power of God. For *hūn* who shuts his eyes, the sun affords no light. Men are judged by the truth which they despise, and betrayed by the sin which they love. Israel can no longer withstand the nations over whom it formerly triumphed, because it courts their idols and leaves its own God.

Thus men suffer through the passions which they entertain. They are plundered, when instead

of God, they serve Baal-Mammon. The judgment of the word which they forsake, is confirmed. Men lose the freedom of the children of God, when (1) they are no longer grateful to God; consequently, (2) remember Him no more; hence, (3) attend no longer to the preaching of repentance; and despite of it, (4) serve idols.

STARKE: He who engages in another worship, forsakes the true God, and apostatizes from Him. But woe to the man who does this: for he brings himself into endless trouble. THE SAME: God is as true to his threats as to his promises. LISCO: The people whom trouble and bondage had brought to a consciousness of their guilt, sank again into idolatry through levity and commerce with heathen, and thus new chastisements became necessary. GERLACH: The judgment affords a deep glance into God's government of the world, showing how He makes all sin subservient to his own power, by punishing it with the very evils that arise from it.

*The interposition of God in Israel's behalf by the appointment of Judges. Deliverance and the death of the Deliverer the occasion of renewed apostasy.*

#### CHAPTER II. 16-23.

- 16 Nevertheless [And] the Lord [Jehovah] raised up judges, which [and they] delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they would not [But neither did they] hearken unto their judges, but<sup>1</sup> they went a whoring<sup>a</sup> after other [false] gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly<sup>b</sup> out of the way<sup>2</sup> which their fathers walked in, obeying<sup>3</sup> the commandments of the Lord [Jehovah]; but they did not so. And when the Lord [Jehovah] raised them up judges, then the Lord [Jehovah] was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: (for it repented the Lord [Jehovah] because of their groanings [wailings<sup>c</sup>] by reason of them that oppressed<sup>d</sup> them and vexed [persecuted<sup>e</sup>] <sup>4</sup> them.) And [But] it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned [turned back], and corrupted themselves<sup>5</sup> more than their fathers, in following other [false] gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from<sup>6</sup> their own [omit: own] [evil] doings,<sup>f</sup> nor from their stubborn way.<sup>g</sup> And the anger of the Lord [Jehovah] was hot [kindled] against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant<sup>h</sup> which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice: I also will not henceforth [will not go on to] drive out any [a man] from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died: that through them I may prove [in order by them to prove<sup>i</sup>] <sup>7</sup> Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord [Jehovah] to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not. Therefore [And] the Lord [Jehovah] left those [these] nations [at rest<sup>k</sup>], without driving them out hastily [so that they should not be speedily driven out], neither delivered he them [and delivered them not] into the hand of Joshua.

<sup>a</sup> Ver. 17. — זָנָה, כָּי, etc., cf. Deut. xxxi. 16.

<sup>b</sup> Ver. 17. — קָרַב מִיָּדָה, cf. Ex. xxxii. 8; Deut. ix. 12.

<sup>c</sup> Ver. 18. — בִּנְיָהֶם, from בָּנָה, cf. Ex. ii. 24, vi. 5.

<sup>d</sup> Ver. 18. — לָחֵץ, cf. Ex. iii. 9.

<sup>e</sup> Ver. 18. — דָּרַס, appears here for the first time. Cf. the Greek δάσσω.

<sup>f</sup> Ver. 19. — Cf. Deut. xxviii. 20.

<sup>g</sup> Ver. 19. — הִיָּשָׁה, with reference to Ex. xxxiii. 5

etc., where already Israel is called הִיָּשָׁה-לְיָהּ.

<sup>h</sup> Ver. 20. — Cf. Josh. vii. 11.

<sup>i</sup> Ver. 22. — Cf. Ex. xvi. 4; xx. 20; Deut. viii. 2, 16 xiii. 4 (3).

<sup>k</sup> Ver. 23. — Cf. Num. xxxii. 15.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 17. — Dr. Cassel has *denn*, "for." "But" is better. On **ב** after a negative, cf. Ges. *Gr.* p. 272, at top. — **Ta.**  
[2 Ver. 17. — That is, as often as a Judge had succeeded in bringing them back to the way of their fathers, they quickly left it again. So Bachmann. — **Ta.**]

[3 Ver. 17. — **לְשֹׁמֵעַ** : "to that they obeyed." On this less regular, but by no means rare (cf. ver. 19, Ps. lxxviii 18; 1 Sam. xx. 20; etc.) use of the infin. with **לְ**, cf. Ew. 280 d. — **Ta.**]

[4 Ver. 18. — **דָּחֹק**, only here and in Joel ii. 8. If the clause were rendered : "before those that crowded (**דָּחֹק**, cf. on ch. i. 34) and pressed upon them," its metaphorical character would be preserved as nearly as possible. — **Ta.**]

[5 Ver. 19. — The E. V. is correct as to sense; but the Hebrew phrase, filled out, would be, "they corrupted their way," cf. Geo. vi. 12. — **Ta.**]

[6 Ver. 19. — **לֹא הִפְלִיחוּ מִן** : lit. "they caused not (sc. their conduct, course of action) to fall away from their (evil) deeds." — **Ta.**]

[7 Ver. 22. — **לְמַעַן נִפְתָּר**. Grammatically this infin. of design may be connected either with **לֹא אִיכִיף**, ver. 21, **וַיֹּאמֶר**, ver. 20, or **נִצֹּב**. The first construction (adopted by E. V.) is inadmissible, because, I. It supposes that Jehovah himself continues to speak in ver. 22, in which case we should expect **אֶת־דִּרְכִּי**, first per., rather than **יְהוָה אֶת־דִּרְכִּי**. 2. It supposes that the purpose to prove Israel is now first formed, whereas it is clear from ch. iii. 1, 4, that it was already operative in the time of Joshua. This objection is also fatal to the construction with **נִצֹּב**, adopted by Keil. (That Dr. Cassel adopts one of these two appears from the fact that he reads : "whether they *will* (instead of *would*, see farther on) keep the way of Jehovah," but which of the two is not clear.) It remains, therefore, to connect with **נִצֹּב**, against which there is no objection, either grammatical or logical. "For in such loosely added infinitives of design, in which the subject is not definitely determined, the person of the infin. goes back to the preceding principal word *only* when no other relation is more obvious, see Ew. 337 b (cf. Ex. ix. 16). But that here, as in the perfectly analogous parallel passage, ch. iii. 4, the design expressed by the infin. is not Joshua's nor that of the nations, but Jehovah's, is self-evident, and is besides expressly declared in ver. 23 and ch. iii. 1. So rightly LXX. *It. Pesh. Ar. Aug. (ques. 17), Ser. Stud.* and many others" (Bachmann). The connection from ver. 21 onward is therefore as follows : In ver. 21 Jehovah is represented (cf. foot-note 3 on p. 62) as saying, "I will not go on to drive out the nations which Joshua left when he died." To this the author of the Book himself adds the purpose for which they were left, namely, to prove Israel, whether they would (not, *will*) keep the way (**אֶת־דִּרְכִּי**) of Jehovah to walk therein (**כִּם**, plur. "in them," *constr. ad sensum*, the way of Jehovah consisting of the **יְהוָה מִצְוֹת**, Deut. vii. 2. — Keil), as their fathers kept it, or not. "And so," he continues, *i. e.* in consequence of this purpose, "Jehovah (not merely Joshua) left these nations (**הַחֵלְלִים**, these, pointing forward to ch. iii. 1 ff., where they are enumerated,) at rest, in order that they should not speedily (for that would have been inconsistent with the design of proving Israel by them, but yet ultimately) be driven out, and did not give them into the hand of Joshua." But the "not speedily" of Joshua's time had by Israel's faithless apostasy been changed into "never." — **Ta.**]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

The first two chapters indicate, by way of introduction, the laws of historical cause and effect whose operation explains the occurrences about to be related in the succeeding pages. They are designed to give information concerning that most important of all subjects in Israel, — the relation of the will of God to his chosen people. Since prosperity and calamity were both referred to God, it was necessary to explain the moral grounds of the same in the favor or wrath of God. It was most important, in view of the peculiar histories which were to be narrated, that the doubts which might be raised against the doctrine of God's all-powerful and world-controlling direction, should be obviated. The connection between the national fortunes, as about to be related, and the declarations of the Mosaic law, was to be pointed out. The reader was to be informed why the purposes of God concerning the glory of Israel in Canaan, as unfolded to Moses, had been so imperfectly fulfilled. In ch. i. a historical survey of the conquests of the tribes had been given, in order in connection therewith to state how little heed had been given to the behest of the law to expel the nations. In that disobedience the germ of all subsequent misfortunes was contained. For by mingling with the heathen nations, the chosen people fell into sin. With Israel to fall from God was actually to fall

back into bondage. In their distress and anguish, God (vers. 15 and 18) mercifully heard their crying, as he had heard it in Egypt (Ex. ii. 24; vi. 5). Now, as then, He raised them up heroes, who through his might smote the enemy, and delivered the people from both internal and external bondage (ver. 16). This, however, did not remove the evil in its germ. Since the judgeship was not hereditary, the death of each individual Judge brought back the same state of things which followed the departure of Joshua and his contemporaries. The nation continually fell back into its old sin (vers. 18, 19). The history of events under the Judges, is the history of ever recurring exhibitions of divine compassion and human weakness. Hence, the great question in Israel must be one inquiring into the cause of these relations. If, the people might say, present relations owed their existence to the temptations occasioned by the remaining Canaanites, he on whom the first blame for not expelling them must fall, would be none other than Joshua! Why did not that hero of God drive them all out of the land? Why did he not secure the whole land, in all its extended boundaries, for a possession to Israel? If only sea and desert had bounded their territories, Israel would have had no temptation to meddle with the superstitions of neighbors. Left to themselves, they would have thought of nothing else than to serve their God. To this vers. 21 ff. reply : God is certainly the Helper and Guide of Israel, its Libera-

tor and Conqueror; but not to serve the sinfulness and sloth of Israel. The Spirit of God is with Israel, when the freewill of Israel chooses obedience to God. But the freedom of this choice demonstrates itself only under temptation. Abraham became Father of the Faithful because, though tempted (Gen. xxii. 1), he nevertheless stood firm. Fidelity and faith approve themselves only in resistance to seductive influences. God in his omnipotence might no doubt remove every temptation from the path of believers; but He would not thereby bestow a boon on man. The opportunity for sinning would indeed be rendered difficult; but the evidence of victorious conflict with sin would be made impossible. Had God suffered Joshua to remove out of the way all nations who might tempt Israel, the people's inward sinful inclinations would have been no less, it would have cherished no greater love for God its benefactor, it would have forgotten that He was its liberator (ch. ii. 10); and the faith, the fidelity, the enthusiasm, which come to light amid the assaults of temptation, would have had no opportunity to win the approval of God or to secure the impartation of his strength. Unfaithfulness, to be sure, must suffer for its sins; but faithfulness is the mother of heroes. The Book of Judges tells of the trials by which God suffered Israel to be tried through the Canaanites, of the punishments which they endured whenever they failed to stand the tests, — but also of the heroes whom God raised up because they preserved some faith in Him. The closing verses do not therefore contradict the opening of the chapter. The pious elders weep when from the words of the "messenger from Gilgal" they perceive the temptation. The unfaithful younger generation must suffer the penalty because they yielded to the seduction. Joshua would doubtless have expelled all the nations; but God did not permit it. He died; but in his place God raised up other heroes, who liberated Israel when, in distress, it breathed penitential sighs. Such, in outline, are the author's thoughts as to the causes which underlie his history. He uses them to introduce his narrative, and in the various catastrophes of the history constantly refers to them.

Vers. 16-19. And Jehovah raised them up Judges, שופטים, *Shophetim*. This word occurs here for the first time in the special sense which it has in this period of Israelitish history, and which it does not appear to have had previously. שופט is to judge, to decide and to proceed according to the decision, in disputes between fellow-country-

men and citizens. Originally, Moses, deeming it his duty to exercise all judicial functions himself, was the only judge in Israel (Ex. xviii. 16). But when this proved impracticable, he committed the lesser causes to trustworthy men from among the people, just as at the outset the Spartan ephors had authority only in unimportant matters. These he charged (Ex. xviii. 21; Deut. i. 16) to "judge righteously between every man and his brother." For the future, he enjoins the appointment of judges in every city (Deut. xvi. 18). Their jurisdiction extends to cases of life and death, to matters of idolatry as all other causes (Deut. xvii. 1-12; xxv. 2); and although the words are "thou shalt make thee judges," the judges are nevertheless clothed with such authority as renders their decisions completely and finally valid. Whoever resists them, must die (Deut. xvii. 12). The emblem of this authority, in Israel as elsewhere, was the staff or rod, as we see it carried by Moses. The root שָׁפַט is therefore to be connected with שֹׁבֵט, staff, σκήπτρον, *scipio*.

שָׁפַט is a staff-man, a judge. In the Homeric poems, when the elders are to sit in judgment, the heralds reach them their staves (*Il.* xviii. 506); "but now (says Achilles, *Il.* i. 237), the judges carry in their hands the staff."<sup>1</sup> Judicial authority is the chief attribute of the royal dignity. Hence, God, the highest king, is also "the Judge of all the earth" (Gen. xviii. 25). He judges concerning right and wrong, and makes his awards accordingly. When law and sin had ceased to be distinguished in Israel, compassion induced Him to appoint judges again. If these are gifted with heroic qualities, to vanquish the oppressors of Israel, it is nevertheless not this heroism that forms their principal characteristic. That consists in "judging." They restore, as was foreseen, Deut. xvii. 7, 12, the authority of law. They enforce the penalties of law against the sin of disobedience towards God. It is the spirit of this law living in them, that makes them strong. The normal condition of Israel is not one of victory simply; it is a condition in which הָיָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל law and right,<sup>2</sup> are kept. For this reason, God raises up *Shophetim*, judges, not princes (*nesimim, sarim*). The title sets forth both their work and the occasion of their appointment. Israel is free and powerful when its law is observed throughout the land.<sup>3</sup> Henceforth, (as appears from Deut. xvii. 14,) except *shophetim*, only kings, *melakin*, can rule in Israel. The difference between them

1 A similarly formed title is that of *Batonnier*, given by the French to the chief of the barristers, and yet very different from the mediæval *bastonnier*.

2 [Dr. Cassel's words are: *Gesetz und Recht*. For the latter term, as technically used, the English language has no equivalent. It is Right as determined by law. — Ta.]

3 [Dr. Bachmann (with many others) reaches an entirely different definition of the "Judges." The Judge as such, he contends, acts in an external direction, in behalf of, not on, the people. A Judge, in the special sense of our Book, is first of all a Deliverer, a Savior. He may, or he may not, exercise judicial functions, properly speaking, but he is Judge because he delivers. This view he supports by an extended review of the *usus loquendi* of the word, and especially by insisting that ch. ii. 16, 18 admits of no other definition. "Why," he asks, quoting Dr. Cassel, "if a Judge is first of all a restorer of law and right, does not ch. i. 11-19, which gives such prominence to the fact that the breaking of the divine law is the cause of all the hostile oppressions endured by Israel, lay similar stress, when it comes to speak of the Shophetim, on the restoration of the authority of law, but, on the contrary, speaks of the deliv-

erance of the people from its oppressors?" To which it were enough to reply, first, that ver. 16 intends only to show how Israel was delivered from the previously mentioned consequences of its lawless condition, not how it was rescued from the lawless condition itself; and, secondly, that vers. 18, 19 clearly imply, that while military activity may (and from the nature of the case usually did) occupy a part of the Judge's career, efforts, more or less successful, to restore the supremacy of the divine law within the nation engage the whole. Hence, the Deliverer was rightly called Shophet, whereas in his military character he would have been more properly called מוֹשִׁיעַ, cf. ch. iii. 9. Dr. Bachmann, it is true, explains the title Judge (as derived from the second of the three meanings of שָׁפַט, 1. to judge; 2. to save, namely, by affording justice; 3. to rule) by the fact that the O. T. views the assistance sent by Jehovah to his oppressed people as an act of retributive justice towards both oppressed and oppressor, cf. Gen. xv. 14; Ex. vi. 6, vii. 4; but in such cases Jehovah, and not the human organ through whom He acts, is the Judge. — Ta.]



lies chiefly in the hereditariness of the royal office — a difference, it is true, of great significance in Israel, and closely related to the national destiny. The Judge has only a personal commission. His work is to re-inspire Israel with divine enthusiasm, and thus to make it victorious. He restores things to the condition in which they were on the death of Joshua. No successor was necessary, if without a judge, the nation itself maintained the law, and resisted temptation. Israel has enough in its divinely-given law. Rallying about this and the priesthood, it could be free; for God is its King. But it is weak. The Judge is scarcely dead, before the authority of law is shaken. Unity is lost, and the enemy takes advantage of the masterless disorder. Therefore, Judges, raised up by God, and girded with fresh strength, succeed each other, — vigorous rulers, full of personal energy, but called to exercise judgment only in the Spirit of God. It has been customary, in speaking of the Punic *suffetes*, to compare them with the Israelitish *shophetim*. And it is really more correct to regard the *suffetes* as *consules* than as kings. Among the Phœnicians also the idea of king included that of hereditariness.<sup>1</sup> The *suffetes* were an elected magistracy, whose name, like that of the Judges, was doubtless derived from the fact that they also constituted the highest judicial authority. They sat in judgment (*ad jus dicendum*) when the designs of Aristo came to light (Livy, xxxiv. 61). It is, in general, by no means uncommon for the magistracy of a city (*summus magistratus*), as in the Spanish Gades (Livy, xxviii. 37), to be styled Judges, *i. e.* *suffetes*. As late as the Middle Ages, the title of Spanish magistrates was *judices*. The highest

officer of Sardinia was termed *judez*.<sup>2</sup> The Israelitish Judges differ from the *suffetes*, not so much by the nature of their official activity, as by the source, purpose, and extent of their power. In Israel also common *shophetim* existed everywhere; but the persons whom God selected as deliverers were in a peculiar sense men of divine law and order. They were not regular but extraordinary authorities. Hence, they were not, like the *suffetes*, chosen by the people. God himself appointed them. The spirit of the national faith placed them at the head of the people.

Ver. 20, etc.<sup>3</sup> I will not go on to drive out a man of the nations which Joshua left when he died. The purport of this important sentence, which connects chapters i. and iii. historically and geographically, is as follows: The whole land, from the wilderness of Edom to Mount Casius and the "road to Hamath," and from Jordan to the sea, was intended for Israel. But it had not been given to Joshua to clear this whole territory. A group of nations, enumerated ch. iii. 3, had remained in their seats. Nor did the individual tribes, when they took possession of their allotments, make progress against them (cf. ch. i. 19, 34). Especially does this explain what is said above, ch. i. 31, of the tribe of Asher. Israel, therefore, was still surrounded by a circle of heathen nations, living within its promised borders, to say nothing of those who with their idolatry were tolerated in the territory actually subjugated (cf. ch. i. 21, 27, 30). These were the nations by whom temptations and conflicts were prepared for Israel, and against whom, led by divinely-inspired heroes, it rose in warlike and successful resistance

<sup>1</sup> Which Movers (*Phönizier*, ii. 1, 536) has improperly overlooked. As those who exercised governmental functions, properly symbolized by the sceptre, the Greek language could scarcely call them anything else than βασιλεις. Some good remarks against Heeren's view of this matter were made by J. G. Schlosser (*Aristoteles' Politik*, i. 195, 196).

<sup>2</sup> It is only necessary to refer to Du Cange, under *Judices*. Similar relations occur in the early political and judicial history of all nations. Cf. Grimm, *Rechtsalterthümer*, p. 759, etc.

<sup>3</sup> [Dr. Cassel, in striving after brevity, has here left a point of considerable interest in obscurity. Ver. 20 reads as follows: "And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he said, Because this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened to my voice, I also will not," etc. How is this verse connected with the preceding? Vers. 11-19 have given a bird's-eye view of the whole period of the Judges. They have described it as a period of constantly renewed backsliding, calling down God's anger on Israel, and not permanently cured even by the efforts of the Judges. Thereupon ver. 20 proceeds as above; and the question arises, to what point of time in the whole period it is to be referred. Dr. Bachmann argues that in ver. 20 the narrative goes back to the "sentence" pronounced at Bochim (see ver. 3). "Ver. 20," he says, "adds [to the survey in vers. 11-19] that, before God's anger attained its complete expression in delivering Israel into the hands of strange nations (ver. 14), it had already manifested itself in the determination not to drive those nations out; and with this the narrative returns to the judgment of Bochim." Accordingly, he interprets the נִיחָר, "and he said," of ver. 20, as introducing an actual divine utterance, namely, the one delivered at Bochim. Without following the whole course of Dr. Bachmann's argument, it is enough here to say that his conclusion is surely wrong, and that the source of his error lies in the view he takes of the words spoken at Bochim, which are not a "sentence" or "judgment," but a warning, designed to obviate the necessity for denouncing judgment. The true connection, in my judgment (and as

I think Dr. Cassel also conceives it), is as follows: When Joshua ceased from war, there were still many nations left in possession of territory intended for Israel, cf. Josh. xiii. 1 ff. They were left temporarily, and for the good of Israel, cf. Judg. ii. 22, 23, iii. 1. 2. At the same time Israel was warned against the danger that thus arose, and distinctly told that if they entered into close and friendly relations with the people thus left, Jehovah would not drive them out at all, but would leave them to become a scourge to them, Josh. xxiii. 12 f. Nevertheless, Israel soon adopted a line of conduct towards them such as rendered it inevitable that the prohibited relations must soon be established, cf. Judg. i. Then came the warning of Bochim. It proved unavailing. Israel entered into the closest connections with the heathen, forsook Jehovah, and served Baal and Ashtaroth, ch. iii. 6, ii. 11 ff. The contingency of Josh. xxiii. 12, 13 had actually occurred, and its conditional threat passed over into irrevocable determination on the part of Jehovah. The time of the determination falls therefore in the earlier part of the period of the Judges; but as the moment at which it went into force was not signalized by any public announcement, and as each successive apostasy added, so to speak, to its finality, the author of the Book of Judges makes express mention of it (allusion to it there is already in vers. 14 h, 15 a), only at the close of his survey, where, moreover, it furnished an answer to the question which the review itself could not fail to suggest, Why did God leave these nations to be a constant snare to Israel? why was it, that even the most heroic Judges, men full of faith in God and zeal for Israel, did not exterminate them? The נִיחָר of ver. 20, therefore, does not introduce an actual divine utterance. The author derives his knowledge of God's determination, first, from Josh. xxiii. 13, and secondly, from the course of the history; but in order to give impressiveness and force to his statement, he "clothes it in the form of a sentence pronounced by God" (Keil). The ׀ in ׀׀׀ denotes logical, not temporal, sequence. On the connection of ver. 22 ff. with ver. 21, see note 7 under the text. — Ta.]



With their enumeration, briefly made in ch. iii. 1-5, the author closes his introduction to the narration of subsequent events. The historical and moral background on which these arise, is now clear. Not only the scene and the combatants, but also the causes of conflict and victory have been indicated.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

The judgments of God are indescribable — his compassion is indefatigable. Whatever God had promised in the law, must come to pass, be it prosperity or distress. Apostasy is followed by ruin; the loss of character by that of courage. Heroes become cowards; conquerors take to flight. Shame and scorn came upon the name of Israel. The nation could no longer protect its cities, nor individuals their homes. In distress, the people returned to the altars which in presumptuous pride they had left. *Old* Israel wept when it heard the preaching of repentance; *new* Israel weeps only when it feels the sword of the enemy. And God's compassion is untiring. He gave them deliverers, choosing them from among Israel's judges, making them strong for victory and salvation. But in his mercy He chastened them. For Israel must be trained and educated by means of judgment and mercy. The time to save them by a king had not yet come. Judah had formerly led the van; but neither was the education of this tribe completed. Judges arose in Israel; but their office was not hereditary. When the Judge died a condition of national affairs ensued like that which followed the death of Joshua: the old remained faithful, the young apostatized. The Judges for the most part exercised authority in single tribes. The heathen were not expelled from the borders assigned to Israel; Israel must submit to ever-renewed trials; and when it failed to stand, then came the judgment. But in this discipline, compassion constantly manifested itself anew. The word of God continued to manifest its power. It quietly reared up heroes and champions. The contents of these verses form the substance of the whole Book. Israel must contend, — 1, with sin, and 2, with enemies; it experiences, — 1, the discipline of judgment, and 2, the discipline of compassion; but in contest and in discipline that which approves itself is, — 1, the victory of repentance, and 2, the obedience of faith.

Thus the contents of the Book of Judges afford a look into the history of Christian nations. They have found by experience what even in a modern novel the author almost involuntarily puts into the mouth of one of his characters (B. Abeken, *Greifensee*, i. 43): "Truly, when once the granite rock on which the church is reared has crumbled away, all other foundations crumble after it, and nothing remains but a nation of cowards and voluptuaries." A glance into the spiritual life shows the same process of chastisement and compassion. The Apostle says (2 Cor. xii. 7): "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." A recent philosopher (Fischer, *Gesch. der neueren Philos.*, i. 11) defines philosophy to be, not so much universal science, as *self-knowledge*. If this be correct, repentance is the true philosophy, for in repentance man learns to know himself in all the various conditions of apostasy and ruin, reflection and return, pride and penitence, heart-quickenings and longing after divine compassion.

STARKE: Fathers, by a bad example, make their children worse than themselves; for from old sins, new ones are continually growing, **THE SAME**. Although God knows and might immediately punish all that is hidden in men, his wisdom employs temptation and other means to bring it to the light, that his justice may be manifest to his creatures. **THE SAME**: Through tribulation and the cross to the exercise of faith and obedience, prayer and hope. And all this tends to our good; for God tempts no one to evil. **THE SAME**: Though God permit, He does not approve, the unrighteous oppressor of the unrighteous, but punishes his unrighteousness when his help is invoked. **LISCO**: God's judgment on Israel is the non-destruction of the heathen. **GERLACH**: From the fact that the whole history does at the same time, through scattered hints, point to the flourishing period of Israel under the kings, we learn that these constantly-recurring events do not constitute a fruitless circle, ever returning whence it started, but that through them all, God's providence conducted his people, by a road wonderfully involved, to a glorious goal.

#### *Enumeration of the heathen nations left to prove Israel.*

#### CHAPTER III. 1-4.

- 1 Now these *are* the nations which the Lord [Jehovah] left [at rest], to prove Israel by them, (*even as many of Israel as had not known* [by experience] all the wars of Canaan;
- 2 Only that the generations of the children [sons] of Israel might know to teach them
- 3 war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof;)<sup>1</sup> *Namely*, five lords [principalities] of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hi-ites that dwelt [dwell] in mount Lebanon, from mount Baal-hermon unto the entering in of
- 4 [lit. unto the coming i. e. the road to] Hamath. And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the Lord [Jehovah], which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 2. — Dr. Cassel renders this verse freely: "Only that to give experience to the generations of the sons of Israel, they might teach them war which they did not formerly learn to know." He supplies a second **לְמַעַן** before **לְלַמְּדָם** (see the exposition below), and in a note (which we transfer from the foot of the page), remarks: "Ver. 2 contains two subordinate clauses dependent on the subject of the principal sentence in ver. 1, which is 'Jehovah.' In the first of these clauses (each of which is introduced by **לְמַעַן**), the subject is 'Israel' (fully, **הָדְוֹת בְּיִישׁׁי**): in the second, 'the nations.' The first expresses the result of the second; that which Israel experiences is, that the nations teach it war." Keil (who follows Bertheau) explains as follows: "only (**כֵּן**, with no other view than) to know the subsequent generations (**הָדְוֹת**, the generations after Joshua and his contemporaries) of the sons of Israel, that He (Jehovah) might teach them war, only those who had not learned to know them (the wars of Canaan)." But, 1, if **הָדְוֹת** were in the accus., the author could hardly have failed to remove all ambiguity by prefixing **אֵת** to it. 2. An infn. of design with **לְ**, following one with **לְמַעַן**, without **ו** to indicate coördination, can only be subordinate to the preceding. Thus in the English sentence: "We eat in order to live to work," "to work," would be at once interpreted as subordinate to "to live." A second **לְמַעַן** might indicate coördination even without the assistance of **ו**, cf. in English: "We eat in order to live, in order to work;" where we feel at once that "to live" and "to work" are coördinate so far as their relation to the principal verb is concerned. Hence, Dr. Cassel inserts a second **לְמַעַן**; but this is an expedient too much like cutting the Gordian knot to be satisfactory. Bachmann, who in the main agrees with our author, avoids this by treating **לְלַמְּדָם** as a gerundive adverbial phrase. As for **נָעַר** it is not indeed impossible that, remembering what he said in ch. ii. 10 (**לֹא יָדְעוּ**, etc.), and just now substantially repeated in ver. 1 b, the writer of Judges uses it here absolutely, to indicate briefly the opposite of the condition there described, in which case Dr. Cassel's rendering would be sufficiently justified. But since **הָדְוֹת בְּיִישׁׁי** (ver. 2 a) clearly represents the **אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר לֹא** of ver. 1 b, it seems obvious that the **נָעַר** of ver. 2 in like manner resumes the **יָדְעוּ אֵת כָּל-מִלְחָמוֹת בְּנָעֵן** of ver. 1. We may suppose, therefore, that the pronoun "them" is here, as frequently, omitted after **נָעַר**, and translate, freely, thus: "And these are the nations which Jehovah left to prove Israel by them—all that Israel which did not know all the wars of Canaan, in order that the after generations of Israel (they also) might know (understand and appreciate) them (*i. e.* those wars), in that he (*i. e.* Jehovah, or they, the nations) taught them war, (not war in general, however, but) only the wars which (or, such wars as) they did not formerly know." The first **כֵּן**, as Bachmann remarks, limits the design of Jehovah, the second the thing to be taught. As to the last clause of ver. 2, if the accents be disregarded, the only difficulty in the way of the rendering here given is the plural suffix **ם**; but this probably arises from the fact that the writer's mind at once recurs to the "wars of Canaan." The **לְקִנִּים**, of old, is used from the point of time occupied by the "after generations," as was natural to a writer who lived so late as the period of kings, and not from that in which the **הָקִינִי** of ver. 1, and its design, took place. The masculine **ם** to represent a fem. plur. is not very unfrequent, cf. 2 Sam. xx. 3; 2 Kgs. xviii. 13. Dr. Bachmann connects the last clause with **נָעַר**, respects the accents (which join **לְקִנִּים** with **אֲשֶׁר**, not with **יָדְעוּ**, **לֹא**), and renders: "that Israel might learn to know . . . war, namely, only those (wars) which were formerly, they did not know them = only the former wars which they did not know." The sense is not materially affected by this change. — Tr.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 1. All who had not experienced the wars of Canaan. These are they of whom it was said, ch. ii. 10, that they "knew not the works of the Lord." This younger generation, after the death of Joshua and the elders, enjoyed the fruits of conquest, but did not estimate aright the greatness of the dangers endured by the fathers, and therefore did not sufficiently value the help of God. The horrors of war, to be known, must be experienced. As if the conquest of Canaan had been of easy achievement! It was no light thing to triumph over the warlike nations. Was not the tribe of Judah, although victorious, obliged nevertheless to abandon the valley to the iron chariots? But of that the rising generation no longer wished to know anything. They did not know what "a war with Canaan signified."

Ver. 2. Only that to give experience to the generations of the sons of Israel they might teach them war, with which they did not before become acquainted. The construction of the sentence is difficult, and consequently has been frequently misunderstood (among others, by Bertheau). The book which the narrator is about to write, is a Book of Wars; and it is therefore incumbent upon him to state the moral causes in which these originated. God proves Israel for its own good. With this in view, "He left the nations in peace, to prove Israel by them." How prove Israel? By depriving it of rest through them. They compel Israel to engage in conflict. In defeat the people learn to know the violence of Canaanitish oppression, and, when God sends them heroes, the preciousness of the boon of restored freedom. Only for this; the emphasis of the verse

**falls on only** (רַף), which is introduced twice. Between יִשְׂרָאֵל and לְלִמְצֹן<sup>1</sup> is to be supplied. The Hebrew *usus loquendi* places both clauses (לְלִמְצֹן וְלִמְצֹן צַדִּיק), each beginning with לְלִמְצֹן, alongside of each other without any connective, whereby one sets forth the ground of the other. God leaves the nations in peace, "in order that they might teach the Israelites what war with Canaan signified, — in order that those generations might know it who had not yet experienced it." It is not for technical instruction in military science that He leaves the heathen nations in the land, but that Israel may know what it is to wage war, that without God it can do nothing against Canaan, and that, having in the deeds of contemporary heroes a present counterpart of the experience of their fathers, who beheld the mighty works which God wrought for Israel through Moses and Joshua, it may learn humility and submission to the law. This reason why God did not cause the Canaanites to be driven out, does not, however, contradict that given in ch. ii. 22. Israel can apostatize from God, only when it has forgotten Him. The consequence is servitude. In this distress, God sends them Judges. These triumph, in glorious wars, over victorious Canaan. Grateful Israel, being now able to conceive, in their living reality, the wonders by which God formerly raised it to the dignity of nationality, has learned to know the hand of its God. Cf. ver. 4.

Ver. 3. **Five principalities of the Philistines.** Josh. xiii. 2, *seq.*, enumerates the nations which were to remain, with still more distinctness. There, however, the reason, given in our passage, why God let them remain, is not stated. The principalities of the Philistines must be treated of elsewhere. The Canaanites and the Zidonians are the inhabitants of the Phœnician coast. The importance of Zidon has already been pointed out in ch. i. 31. The districts *not* under Zidonian supremacy, are referred to by the general term "Canaanite." The Hivite, here mentioned as an inhabitant of Mount Lebanon, does not occur under that name in Josh. xiii. 5. He is there spoken of under the terms, "land of the Gîblites (Byblus, etc.) and all Lebanon;" here, a more general designation is employed. The name הִיִּזִּי indicates and explains this in a manner highly interesting. The LXX. render הִיִּזִּי by Εὐαῖος, as for הִיִּזִּי, the mother of all the living, they give Εὐα. The word הִיִּזִּי, to live, whence הִיִּזִּי, includes the idea of "roundness, circularity of form." So the ὠόν, ovum, egg, is round, and at the same time the source of life. Consequently, הִיִּזִּי and הִיִּזִּי came to signify battle-array or encampment (cf. 2 Sam. xxiii. 11) and village (Num. xxxii. 41), from the circular form in which camps and villages were disposed. The people called Hivite is the people that resides in *round villages*. Down to the present day — marvelous tenacity of national custom! — the villages in Syria are so built that the conically-shaped houses form a circular street, inclosing an open space in the centre for the herds and flocks.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Josh. iv. 24. [Compare the note under "Textual and Grammatical." — Tr.]

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Preller, *Gr. Mythol.*, i. 77. He is such as ἀκαῖος, ἀκαῖος, etc. That ἀνεράντος also has no other meaning, Preller shows elsewhere. Mountain temples, says Welcker

Modern travellers have found this style of building still in use from the Orontes to the Euphrates (Ritter, xvii. 1698). It distinguished the Hivite from the other nations. And it is, in fact, found only beyond the boundary here indicated; on northern Lebanon, above Mount Hermon. This therefore also confirms the remarks made above (at ch. i. 33), on the parallel passage, Josh. xiii. 5, where we find the definition "from Baal-gad under Mount Hermon," whereas here we read of a "mount Baal Hermon." Baal Hermon, according to its signification, corresponds exactly with the present name Jebel esh-Sheikh, since on the one hand Sheikh may stand for Baal, while, on the other, Hermon derived its name from its peculiar form. הִרְמֹן is a dialectic equivalent of the Hebrew אֶרְמוֹן. אֶרְם is the height, the highlands:

הִרְמֹן the prominent point, the commanding fortress. Hermon, as the southern foot of Anti Libanus, is its loftiest peak. It towers grandly, like a giant (cf. Ritter, xvii. 151, 211), above all its surroundings, — like a silver-rooted fortress of God. This is not the only instance in which Hermon is apparently the name of a mountain. It is probable indeed that to the Greeks the Hermæan Promontory (Ἐρμαῖα ἄκρα, Polyb. i. xxxvi. 11; cf. Mannert, *Geogr.*, x. ii. 512) suggested only some reference to Hermes. But the greater difficulty of seeing why Hermes should give names to mountain peaks, the more readily do we recognize a

הִרְמֹן, not only in this but also in the promontory of Lemnos, the Hermæan Rock (Ἐρμαῖον ἑσπας) mentioned by Greek poets (Æschyl. *Agam.*, 283). It accords with this that Ptolemy specifies a Hermæan Promontory in Crete also. It is evident how appropriately Hermon, in its signification of Armon, "a fortress-like, towering eminence," is used to denote a promontory. The Greek ἄκρα also has the twofold signification of fortress and promontory; and Mount Hermon itself may to a certain extent be considered to be both one and the other.

It is evident that when in Josh. xiii. 5 the boundary of the hostile nations is defined as running from "Baal-gad under Mount Hermon," and here as extending "from Baal Hermon" onward, the same sacred locality is meant in both passages, and that Baal Hermon is identified with Baal-gad. This is further confirmed by the following: The Talmud (*Chulin*, 40 a) speaks of the sinful worship which is rendered דְּהַר הָאֵלֹהִים, to the God of the mountain, i. e. as Raschi explains, the angel like unto Michael, who is placed over the mountains of the world. Moses ha-Cohen advances an equally ancient conception, current also among the Arabians, when he states (*ap.* Ibn Ezra, on Isa. lxx. 11), that Baal-gad is the star Zedek, i. e. Zeus. For Zeus is in fact the Hellenic deity of all mountain-peaks,<sup>2</sup> the Great Baal Hermon. Hence it was customary among the Hellenes also to prepare sacrificial tables in the service of Zeus; and with Isa. lxx. 11 we may profitably compare Paus. ix. 40, where we learn that in Cheronea, where the sceptre of Zeus was venerated as a palladium, "a table with meat and pastry was daily" prepared. At the birth of a son to her maid, Leah says (Gen.

(*Mythologie*, i. 170), were erected to other gods only *exceptionally*. As for the temple of Hermes on Mount Celene (Paus. viii. 17, 1), it could perhaps be made probable that here also the name of the mountain suggested the worship of Hermes.

xxx. 11): **גַּד** **בָּא** ; which the Chaldee translators already render by **גַּדְלָא טַבָּא** (Jerus. Targ.) and **טַבָּא מַזְלָא** (Jonath.). **מַזְלָא** (cf. 2 Kgs. xxiii. 5), means, star; **טַב** **מַזְלָא** is the good star that appears,—fortune, as the Septuaginta render **τὸ ἄστρον**. Two planets, Jupiter and Venus, were **ἀγαθουργοί** (Plutarch, *De Is. et Os.*, cap. xlviii.), bearers of what is good,—fortune-bringers. Hence, Gad, as “Fortune,” could be connected both with Astarte (cf. Movers, *Phoen.*, i. 636), and with Baal (Jupiter). **גַּד** is manifestly the same as the Persian **חֹדָא** (cf. **גַּדְר** and **חֹדְר**, **גַּבֵּל** and **חֹבֵל**, etc.), *Ghoda*, which signifies god and lord, quite in the sense of **פַּעַל** (cf. Vullers, *Lex. Pers. Lat.*, i. 660). If there be any connection between this term and the Zendic *Khadhda*, it is only that the latter was used to designate the constellations. In heathen views of life, fortune and good coincide. To enjoy the good things of life is to be fortunate. **Αγαθὴ τύχη** is the Hellenic for happiness. The Syriac and Chaldee versions almost uniformly render the terms **אַשְׁרֵי** and **μακάριος**, blessed, which occur in the Old and New Testaments, by **טַב**,

good (cf. my work *Irene*, Erf. 1855, p. 9). In **גַּד** the ideas God and Fortune coëxist as yet unresolved; subsequently, especially in the Christian age, they were separated in the Germanic dialects as God and Good. For there is no doubt that in Gad (God), the good (fortunate) god and constellation, we find the oldest form, and for that reason a serviceable explanation, of the name God, which, like *Elohim*, disengaging itself from heathen conceptions, became the sacred name of the Absolute Spirit. At the same time it affords us the philological advantage of perceiving, what has often been contested (cf. Dieffenbach, *Goth. Lex.* ii. 416; Grimm, *Myth.* pp. 12, 1199, etc.), that God and Good actually belong together. Baal-gad was the God of Fortune, which was held to be the highest good.<sup>1</sup> — The meaning of **לְבוֹא חֶמֶת** has been indicated above (p. 46).

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

[Compare the Homiletical Hints of the preceding section. — KEIL: In the wars of Canaan under Joshua, Israel had learned and experienced that the power which subdued its enemies consisted not in the multitude and valor of its warriors but in the might of its God, the putting forth of which however depended upon Israel's continued faithfulness towards its Possessor. . . . Now, in order to impress them with this truth, on which the existence and prosperity of Israel, and the realization of the purpose for which they had been divinely called, depended; in other words, in order to show them by the practical lessons of experience that the People of Jehovah can fight and conquer only in the strength of their God, the Lord had

suffered the Canaanites to be left in the land. Necessity teaches prayer. The distress into which Israel fell by means of the remaining Canaanites, was a divine discipline, by which the Lord would bring the faithless back to Himself, admonish them to follow his commands, and prepare them for the fulfillment of his covenant-engagements. Hence, the learning of war, i. e. the learning how the People of the Lord should fight against the enemies of God and his kingdom, was a means ordained by God of tempting or trying Israel, whether they would hearken to the commands of their God and walk in the ways of the Lord. When Israel learned so to war, it learned also to keep the divine commands. Both were necessary to the People of God. For as the realization by the people of the blessings promised in the covenant depended on their giving heed to the voice of the Lord, so also the conflict appointed for them was necessary, as well for their personal purification, as for the continued existence and growth of the kingdom of God on earth. — BERTHEAU: The historian cannot sufficiently insist on the fact that the remaining of some of the former inhabitants of the land, after the wars of Joshua, is not a punishment but only a trial; a trial designed to afford occasion of showing to the Israelites who lived after Joshua benefits similar to those bestowed on his contemporaries. And it is his firm conviction that these benefits, consisting chiefly of efficient aid and wonderful deliverances in wars against the remaining inhabitants, would assuredly have accrued to the people, if they had followed the commands of Jehovah, especially that on which such stress is laid in the Pentateuch, to make no league with the heathen, but to make war on them as long as a man of them remains.

HENRY: It was the will of God that Israel should be inured to war.—1. Because their country was exceeding rich and fruitful, and abounded with dainties of all sorts, which if they were not sometimes made to know hardship, would be in danger of sinking them into the utmost degree of luxury and effeminacy,—a state as destructive to everything good as it is to everything great, and therefore to be carefully watched against by all God's Israel. 2. Because their country lay very much in the midst of enemies, by whom they must expect to be insulted; for God's heritage was as a speckled bird; the birds round about were against her. . . . Israel was a figure of the church militant, that must fight its way to a triumphant state. The soldiers of Christ must endure hardness. Corruption is therefore left remaining in the hearts even of good Christians, that they may learn war, keep on the whole armor of God, and stand continually on their guard.

WORDSWORTH: “*To teach them war.*” So unbelief awakens faith, and teaches it war; it excites it to contend earnestly for the truth. The dissemination of false doctrines has led to clearer assertions of the truth. Heresies have produced the creeds. “There must be heresies,” says the Apostle, “that they who are approved among you may be made manifest” (1 Cor. xi. 19). — TR.]

<sup>1</sup> Movers (*Phoen.* ii. 2, 515) thinks that he can explain the name of the Numidian seaport Cirta from **גַּד** **רִישָׁא**, which is doubtful. On the other hand, when the *Etymolog. Magnum*, under *Γάδρα*, expresses the opinion that *indus* in Spain was so named because “*γάδον παρ' αὐτοῖς τὸ*

*ἐκ μικρῶν ὀφικοδομημένον*,” there is evidently no reference to **גַּד**, hut to Gad in the sense of Fortune. For the stress is laid not on the small beginnings, but on the good for tune, which from a small city made it great. This on Movers, ii. 2, 621, not. 89 a.

## PART SECOND.

THE History of Israel under the Judges: a history of sin, ever repeating itself, and of Divine Grace, constantly devising new means of deliverance. Meanwhile, however, the imperfections of the judicial institute display themselves, and prepare the way for the Appointment of a King.

## FIRST SECTION.

THE SERVITUDE TO CHUSHAN-RISHATHAIM, KING OF MESOPOTAMIA. OTHNIEL, THE JUDGE OF BLAMELESS AND HAPPY LIFE.

*Israel is given up into the power of Chushan-rishathaim on account of its sins.  
Othniel is raised up as a Deliverer in answer to their penitence.*

## CHAPTER III. 5-11.

5 And the children [sons] of Israel dwelt among [in the midst of] the Canaanites,  
6 Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: And they took  
7 their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served  
8 their gods. And the children [sons] of Israel did evil<sup>1</sup> in the sight of the Lord  
[Jehovah], and forgot the Lord [Jehovah] their God, and served Baalim, and the  
9 groves [Asheroth]. Therefore [And] the anger of the Lord [Jehovah] was hot  
[kindled] against Israel, and he sold them [gave them up] into the hand of Chushan-  
rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia [Aram-naharaim]: and the children [sons] of Israel  
10 served Chushan-rishathaim eight years. And when [omit: when] the children  
[sons] of Israel cried unto the Lord [Jehovah], [and] the Lord [Jehovah] raised  
up a deliverer to the children [sons] of Israel, who [and] delivered<sup>2</sup> them, *even*  
11 Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. And the Spirit of the Lord  
[Jehovah] came [was]<sup>3</sup> upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and  
the Lord [Jehovah] delivered Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia [Aram]  
into his hand; and his hand prevailed [became strong]<sup>4</sup> against Chushan-risha-  
thaim. And the land had rest forty years: and Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 7. — Literally, "the evil," as at verse 12 and frequently. On the use of the article compare the "Grammatical" note on ch. ii. 11. Wordsworth's note on the present verse is: "They did *that* evil which God had forbidden as evil." — Tr.]

2 Ver. 9. — יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה (from יָשַׁע), here, without any preposition, with אֶת עֲהֻנִּיָּאִל; on the other hand, at 2 Kgs. xiv. 27, בָּנִי, is inserted. [De Wette, in his German Version, also takes Jehovah as subject of יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה, which seems to be favored by the position of אֶת עֲהֻנִּיָּאִל, which according to the common view would be separated from its governing verb by another verb with a different and unexpressed subject. But Dr. Cassel is certainly wrong when he supplies "through" instead of the "even" of our E. V., and so makes "Othniel" the medium by whom Jehovah delivered. That would be expressed either by בָּנִי or by בָּ, cf. Hos. i. 7; 1 Sam. xiv. 6; xvii. 47. The words אֶת עֲהֻנִּיָּאִל are in apposition with מוֹשִׁיעַ. — Tr.]

[8 Ver. 10. — So do Dr. Cassel and many others render יִהְיֶה; but the rendering "came" is very suitable, if with Dr. Bachmann, we assume יִהְיֶה, etc., to be explanatory of יִהְיֶה, etc., in ver. 9. — Tr.]

4 Ver. 11 — יָצָא, from יָצָא. [On the vowel in the last syllable, see Ges. Gram. 67, Rem. 2. — Tr.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 5. **And the sons of Israel dwelt.** The introduction is ended, and the author now proceeds to the events themselves. Fastening the thread of his narrative to the relations which he has just unfolded, he goes on to say: Israel (therefore) dwelt among the Canaanite, Hittite, Amorite, Perizzite, Hivite, Jebusite. The last of these tribes he had not in any way named before; nor, apparently, is it accurate to say that Israel dwelt among the Jebusites. But the passage is a deeply significant citation. Deut. xx. 17 contains the following: "Thou shalt utterly destroy the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, as Jehovah thy God hath commanded thee; that they teach you not to do after all their abominations." But, says the narrator, the contrary took place; Israel dwells among them, and is consequently, as Moses foretold, initiated into the sins of its neighbors. Hence, just as in that passage, so here also, only six nations are named. At Deut. vii. 1 the Gîrgashites are added. The most complete catalogue of the nations of Canaan is given in Gen. x. 15 ff. Another one, essentially different, is found Gen. xv. 19-21. Here, the writer does not intend to give a catalogue; he names the nations only by way of reproducing the words of Moses, and of manifesting their truthfulness.

Ver. 6, 7. **And they took their daughters.**

Precisely in this consisted the "covenant" (בְּרִית) which they were not to make with them. The reference here is especially to Deut. vii. 2 ff.: "Thou shalt make no covenant with them. And thou shalt not make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For it would turn away thy child from me, and they will serve false gods." All this has here come to pass. We read the consequence of intermarriage in the words: "and they served their gods." The same passage (Deut. vii. 5) proceeds: "Ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their Asheroth." But now Israel served "Baalim and Asheroth." It bent the knee before the altars of Baal and the idols of Astarte. *Ashe-rah* (see below, on ch. vi. 25) is the idol through which Astarte was worshipped. The altar was especially consecrated to Baal, the pillar or tree-idol to her. Hence the Baalim and Asheroth of this passage answer perfectly to the Baal and Asheroth of ch. ii. 13. Instead of destroying, Israel served them. עָבַד is to render bodily and personal service. It is not a matter of thought or opinion merely. He who serves, serves with his body, — he kneels, offers, prays. The ancient translators are therefore right in generally rendering it by λειτουργεῖν. Among the Hellenes, *liturgy* (λειτουργία) meant service which, as Böckh shows, differed from all other obligations precisely in this, that it was to be rendered personally. Hence, also, *liturgy*, in its ecclesiastical sense, corresponded perfectly with *abodah* (עֲבֹדָה), and was rightly used to denote the acts of divine service. Now, when in this way Israel performed *liturgy* before idol images, that took place which Deut. vii. 4

foretold: "the anger of the Lord was kindled." Whenever Israel, the people called to be free, falls into servitude, it is in consequence of the anger of God. It is free only while it holds fast to its God. When it apostatizes from the God of freedom, He gives it up to tyrants, as one gives up a slave (מִכְרָה).

Ver. 8. **He gave them up into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim.** The explanation of Rishathaim, adopted by Bertheau, which derives it from רִשָּׁע, and gives it the sense of "double injustice" or "outrage," is not to be thought of. To say nothing of its peculiar form, there is no reason whatever why this title should be given to Chushan and not to the other tyrants over Israel. Had it been intended to describe him as peculiarly wicked

he would have been called חֲרָשׁ, as in the analogous case of Haman (Esth. vii. 6). The Midrash alone attempts an explanation, and makes Rishathaim to mean Laban. The "double sin" is, that Aram (of which, in the spirit of the Midrash, Laban is the representative) formerly injured Jacob, and now injures his descendants (cf. *Jalkut, Judges*, n. 41). The renderings of the Targum and Peshito<sup>1</sup> sprang from this interpretation. Paul of Tella, on the other hand, follows the Septuagint, which has χουσαρσθαίμ; he, and others of later date, write Χουσαν Ρεσαθώμ (ed. Rördam, p. 74). (Synceus, ed. Bonn. i. 285, has χουσαρσθαίμ.)<sup>2</sup> Rishathaim is manifestly a proper name, and forms the complement of Chushan, which does not conceal its national derivation. At all events, at Hab. iii. 7,<sup>3</sup> where it stands parallel with Midian, it is used to designate nationality.<sup>4</sup> Now, ancient Persian tradition, as found in the *Schahnamh* of Ferdousi, contains reminiscences of warlike expeditions from the centre of Iran against the West.

One of the three sons of Feridoun, Selm (שלם), is lord of the territories west of the Euphrates. The nations of those countries are hostile to Iran. Mention is also made of assistance from *Gangi Jehocht* (as Jerusalem is several times designated) in a war against Iran (cf. Schaek, *Heldens. des Firdusi*, p. 160). The Iranian heroes, on the other hand, Sam, Zal (זל), and Rustem, who carry on the wars of the kings, east and west, are from Sedjestan. Sedjestan, whose inhabitants under the Sassanides also formed the nucleus of the army (cf. Lassen, *Indische Alterth.* ii. 363), derives its name from the *Sacæ* (Sacastene). The name Sacæ, however, is itself only a general ethnographic term, answering to the term Scythians, and comprehended all those powerful nations, addicted to horsemanship and the chase, who made themselves famous as warriors and conquerors in the regions east and west of the Tigris. All Scythians, says Herodotus, are called Sacæ by the Persians. The term Cosæans was evidently of similar comprehensiveness. As at this day Segestan (or Seistan) is still named after the Sacæ, so Khuzistan after the Cosæans (cf. Mannert, v. 2, 495). Moses Chorenensis derives the Parthians from the land of Chushan (ed. Florival, i. 308-311). In the *Nakhschi Rustam* inscription (ver. 30) we read of Khushiya, which certainly appears more suggestive of Cosæi, as Lassen interprets, than of Gaudæ, as passage, is already found in the older Jewish expositors. From any objective, scientific point of view, this view can scarcely be concurred in.

<sup>1</sup> [The "Crime-committing (*frevelnde*) Chushan." See Bertheau in loc. — Tr.]

<sup>2</sup> Josephus has χουσαρσθος. On other readings see Havemann, at Josh., i. 283, not. x.

<sup>3</sup> The opinion of Bertheau that the prophet alludes to our

<sup>4</sup> [That is to say, the term expresses ethnological not local relations — Tr.]

Benfe- explains (*Die Pers. Keilinschr.*, p. 60). That they are quite like the Parthians, Scythians, Sacæ, in the use of the bow and the practice of pillage and the chase, is sufficiently shown by the passage of Strabo (ed. Paris, p. 449, lib. xi. 13, 6). Like Nimrod (Gen. x. 8), all these nations, and also the princes of the Sacæ, Sam, Zal, and Rustem, are represented as heroes and hunters. Nimrod descends from Cush, and rules at the rivers. So here also Cush is a general term for a widely-diffused family of nations. It does not indicate their dwelling-place, but their mode of life and general characteristics.<sup>1</sup> Even the reference in the name of this Chushan to darkness of complexion is not to be overlooked. A centaur (horseman) was with Hesiod (*Scut. Herc.* 185) an *asbolos*. "Asbolos," says Eupolemus (in Euseb., *Præp. Ev.* ix. 17; cf. Niebuhr, *Assur und Babel*, p. 262, note 2), is translated *χοῦμος* by the Hellenes. The second Chaldee king is called Chomasbelos by Berosus (*Fragmenta*, ed. Müller, Paris, p. 503; Niebuhr, p. 490; Syncellus, i. 147, ed. Bonn); while in one passage (Lam. iv. 8) the LXX. translate *shechor*, "black," by *ἀσβόλη*. Syncellus is therefore improperly censured by Niebuhr for comparing Evechios, and not the son of Chomasbelos, with Nimrod. He could compare none but the first king with him who was likewise held to be the first. Accordingly, it cannot appear surprising that kings and heroes beyond the Euphrates are named *כושן*, "Chushan."<sup>2</sup> One of the most famous of the primitive kings of Iran was named *כאוש*, *Kai Kaous*. Persian tradition tells of wars and conquests which he carried on in *Mesi*, *Sham*, and *Rum*, i. e. Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor (cf. Herbelot, *Or. Bibl.* ii. 59). They also relate misfortunes endured by him. In his wars in the West,<sup>3</sup> he was defeated and taken prisoner. His hero and deliverer was always Rustem (*רשתם* or *רשתם*, also *ירושתם*, cf. Vullers, *Lex. Pers.* ii. 32). Now, since it is obviously proper to compare these names with *רשעתים*, "Chushan-rishathaim" (for the *y* as well as the pointing of the Masora dates from the Rabbinic Midrash), there is nothing to oppose the idea that the celebrated Rustem of the East, the hero of Kaous, whom Moses Chorenensis calls the *Saces*, is actually mentioned here. It would enhance the interest of the narrative to find the hero of the Iranian world brought upon the scene of our history. Profane history would here, as so frequently elsewhere, receive valuable illustration from Scripture. An historical period would be approximately gained for Kai Kaous. On the other hand, such conflicts were sufficiently memorable for Israel to serve as testimonies first of God's anger, and then of salvation wrought out by Him.

And they served Chushan-rishathaim, *כושן רשעתים*. God is served with sacrifices; human lords with tribute (cf. ver. 15). Hence the expression *בם*

*עֹבְדֵי*, when a people became tributary. The "eight years" are considered in the introductory section on the Chronology of the Book.

Ver. 9. And the sons of Israel cried unto Jehovah. *וַיִּקְרָאוּ* is the anxious cry of distress. So cried they in Egypt by reason of their heavy service (Ex. ii. 23). They cry to God, as children to their father. In his compassion, He hears them. However, Jeremiah (xi. 11) warns the people against that time "when they shall cry *וַיִּקְרָאוּ*" unto God, but he will not hearken unto them."

And He delivered them through Othniel the son of Kenaz. The Septuagint gives his name as *Γοθονιά*, while Josephus has *Θοδινύλας*. Jerome (*De Nominibus*, ed. Migne, p. 809) has *Athaniel*, which he translates "my time of God" (*tempus meum Dei*). This is also the translation of Leusden in his *Onomasticon*, who however unnecessarily distinguishes between a Gothaniel (1 Chron. xxvii. 15) and Othniel. Gesenius derives the name from the Arabic, and says it means "lion of God." How carefully Josephus follows ancient exegesis, appears from his inserting the story of Othniel only after the abominations of Gibeah (ch. xix.) and those of the tribe of Dan (ch. xviii.); for these occurrences were regarded as belonging to the time of servitude under Chushan (*Jalkut, Judges*, n. 41). But his anxiety to avoid every appearance of improbability does not allow him to call Othniel the brother of Caleb. He speaks of him as "*τῆς 'Ιουδα φυλῆς τις*, one of the tribe of Judah" (*Ant.* v. 3, 3); for he fears lest the Greek reader should take offense at finding Othniel still young and vigorous enough to achieve victory in the field, and render forty years' service as Judge. But the narrator adds emphatically, "the younger brother of Caleb," — in order to leave no doubt that the conqueror of Kirjath-sepher and the victor over Aram were one and the same person. Nor is there any foundation for the scrupulosity of Josephus. In Israel the men capable of bearing arms were enrolled upon the completion of their twentieth year (Num. xxvi. 2, *seq.*). Now, if Othniel was twenty-five years of age when he conquered Kirjath-sepher, and if after that a period of twenty years elapsed, during which a new generation grew up, he would be fifty-three years of age when as hero and conqueror he assumed the judicial office, — a supposition altogether natural and probable. Caleb in his eighty-fifth year still considered himself fully able to take the field. Besides, it is consonant with the spirit which animates the history here narrated, that it is Othniel who appears as the first *Shophet*. Not merely because of the heroism which he displayed before Kirjath-sepher; but a new dignity like this of Judge is easily attracted to one who is already in possession of a certain authority, which was evidently the case with Othniel. He was one of those who, in part at least, had shared the wars with Canaan. He was the brother and son-in-law of the celebrated Caleb, and hence a head of the tribe of Judah, to which in this matter

<sup>1</sup> We cannot enter here on a full illustration of the genealogy of Cush, as given Gen. x. For some excellent remarks see Knobel *Die ethnogr. Tafel*, p. 251. Where he read *Cush*, in Wagenseil's edition of Petachia, Carmoly's edition, probably less correctly, has *Acco*. Where Benjamin of Tudela, v. d. Asher, p. 83, has *פִּרְתַּר*, other manuscripts have *פִּרְתַּר*. *Jush* (Ezek. xxxviii. 5) may also pass for the African.

<sup>2</sup> One of the worst enemies of Kai Kaous was Deo Sefid, i. e. the White Foe. At the birth of Rustem's father, Zal, it was considered a misfortune that his head was white. He was therefore exposed (cf. Schack, *Firdusi*, p. 176).

<sup>3</sup> Some call him ruler of Arabia, others of Syria. Cf. Ma colm, *Hist. of Persia*, i. 27.

also the initiative belongs. Once it was asked, "Who shall first go up?" Judah was the tribe selected by the response. The first Judge whom God appointed, must appear in Judah. That tribe still had strength and energy; there the memory of former deeds achieved by faith was still cherished among the people (cf. *Shemoth Rabba*, § 48, p. 144 a).

Ver. 10. And the spirit of Jehovah was upon him. The spirit of faith, of trust in God, of enthusiasm. It is the same spirit which God bestows upon the seventy also, who are to assist Moses (Num. xi. 25). It was on that occasion that Moses exclaimed, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them." In this spirit, Moses and Joshua performed their great deeds. In this spirit, Joshua and Caleb knew no fear when they explored the land. In this spirit, the spirit of obedience, which in faith performs the law, becomes a spirit of power. Of those seventy we are told (Num. xi. 25), that when they had received the Spirit of God, they prophesied. The Targum therefore translates, both there and here, רוּחַ נְבוּאָה, Spirit of Prophecy. It does this, however, in the case of no Judge but Othniel. For although the רוּחַ יְהוָה is also spoken of in connection with Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson, it merely gives רוּחַ נְבוּאָה in those cases, Spirit of heroism (ch. vi. 34; xi. 29; xiii. 25). The first ground of this distinction conferred on Othniel, is the irreproachable character of his rule. No tragic shadow lies on his life, as on the lives of the other heroes. To this must be added the ancient interpretation, already alluded to above (p. 35, note 2), which identified Othniel with Jabez (1 Chron. iv. 10), and regarded him as a pious teacher of the law. They said concerning him, that his sun arose when Joshua's went down (*Bereshith Rabba*, § 58, p. 51 h). They applied to him the verse in Canticles (iv. 7): "Thou art all fair, there is no spot in thee" (*Shir ha-Shirim Rabba*, on the passage, ed. Amsterd. p. 17 c.).<sup>1</sup>

And he judged Israel. He judged Israel before he went forth to war. It has already been remarked above, that שָׁפַט means to judge in the name of

the law. The Judge enforces the law; he punishes sin, abolishes wrong. If Israel is to be victorious, it is not enough to "cry unto the Lord;"

the authority of the law (מִשְׁפָּט) must be recognized. "These are the מִשְׁפָּטִים (judgments) which thou shalt set before them," is the order, Ex. xxi. 1. Israel must become conscious of God and duty. At that point Othniel's judicial activity began. This was what he taught them for the future. Not till that is accomplished can war be successfully undertaken.

Ver. 11. And the land rested. שָׁקֵט does not occur in the Pentateuch. It signifies that desirable condition of quiet in which the people, troubled by neither external nor internal foes, enjoys its possessions, — when the tumults of war are hushed, and peaceful calm pervades the land. Such rest is found in Israel, when the people obediently serve their God. "The service of righteousness" (says Isaiah, ch. xxxii. 17), is rest (שָׁקֵט) and security forever." Jeremiah (ch. xxx. 10) announces that when Israel shall be redeemed, Jacob shall rest and be free from care (שָׁקֵט וְשִׁשְׁתָּה). The present rest, alas endured only until Othniel died. When he went home, his authority ceased, and peace departed.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Othniel the Judge without offense and without sorrow. The first Judge comes out of Judah. Here also that tribe leads. On all succeeding Judges there rests, notwithstanding their victories, the shadow of error, of grief, or of a tragic end. They were all of other tribes; only Othniel, out of Judah, saved and died without blemish and without sorrow. To him no abnormality of Jewish history attaches. He was the appointed hero of his time. The relative and son-in-law of Caleb continued the line of heroes which begins in the desert. For that very reason he was free from many temptations and irregularities. Men were accustomed to see Judah and the family of Caleb take the lead. Other Judges had first to struggle for that

the former of which characterizes the influence of the Divine Spirit as one which overpowers the resistance of the natural will [the verb יָצַח, which in this connection the E. V. sometimes renders 'to come upon mightily,' as in Judges xiv. 6, sometimes merely 'to come upon,' as in ver. 19 of the same chapter, properly signifies 'to cleave, to cut, to break through' — Ta.], while the latter represents it as a power which envelopes and covers man. They who receive and possess this spirit are thereby endowed with power to perform wonderful deeds. Commonly, the Spirit that has come upon them manifests itself in the ability to prophesy, but also in the power to perform wonders or exploits transcending the natural courage and strength of man. The latter was especially the case with the Judges. Hence the Targum already, on ch. vi. 34, explains the 'Spirit of Jehovah' as the 'Spirit of Strength from the Lord,' while on the other hand in our passage it erroneously thinks of the 'Spirit of Prophecy.' Kimchi also understands here the 'spiritum fortitudinis, quo excitatus, amoto omni metu, bellum adversus Cuschanem suscepit.' It is however scarcely proper so to separate the various powers of the Divine Spirit, as to take it in its operation on the Judges, merely as the Spirit of Strength and Valor. The Judges not only fought the enemy courageously and victoriously, but also judged the people, for which the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, and restrained idolatry (ch. ii. 18 seq.), for which the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord, was required." — Ta.

<sup>1</sup> [KEL: "The Spirit of God is the spiritual life-principle in the world of nature and of mankind; and in man it is the principle as well of the natural life received by birth, as of the spiritual life received through the new birth, cf. Auberlen, *Geist des Menschen*, in Herzog's *Realencykl.*, iv. 731. In this sense, the expression 'Spirit of Elohim' alternates with 'Spirit of Jehovah,' as already in Gen. i. 2, compared with vi. 3, and so on in all the books of the O. T., with this difference, however, that whereas 'Spirit of Elohim' designates the Divine Spirit only in general, on the side of its supernatural causality and power, 'Spirit of Jehovah' presents it on the side of its historical operation on the world and human life, in the interests of salvation. In its operations, however, the Spirit of Jehovah manifests itself as the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, of Council and Strength, of Knowledge and the Fear of the Lord (Isa. xi. 2). The impartation of this spirit in the O. T., makes the form for the most part of an extraordinary, supernatural influence exerted over the human spirit. The usual expression for this is, 'the Spirit of Jehovah (or Elohim)

עָלָיו, came upon him; so here and in xi. 29; 1 Sam. xix. 20, 23; 2 Chron. xx. 14; Num. xxiv. 2. With this, however, the expressions עָלָיו (עֲלֵיהֶם) and רוּחַ יְהוָה, ch. xiv. 6, 19; xv. 14; 1 Sam. x. 10; xi. 6; xvi. 13, and רוּחַ יְהוָה, ch. xiv. 18; the Spirit 'put on (clothed) the person,' ch. vi. 34; 1 Chron. xii. 18; 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, alternate:



authority which Othniel already possessed. He who is exempt from this necessity, escapes many a temptation.

Thus Othniel is a type of sons descended from good families, and of inherited position. From him such may learn their duty to use life and strength for their country. His life shows that to lead and judge is easier for them than for others. There are many "Caleb-relatives" who squander the glory of their name; but yet there have never been wanting Christians who, historically among the first men of their country, have borne aloft the banner of truth. Joachim von Alvensleben composed his Confession of the Christian Faith (printed at Stendal, 1854), that he might acquit himself of his "paternal office" to his family, warn them faithfully, and preserve them from apostasy; so that Martin Chemnitz prays the "good and kind God to preserve *hoc sacrum depositum* in its purity, everywhere in his church, and especially in *nobili hac familia*" (Brunswick, March 1, 1566). The spirit of Othniel clearly manifested itself in Zinzendorf; and he rendered useful service not only in spite of his distinguished name, but especially in his own day, because he bore it. His life, while it testifies that in the spirit of the gospel everything can be turned into a special blessing, shows also that no gift of Providence is to be suppressed, — least of all, one's family and origin (cf. Otto Strauss: *Zinzendorf, Leben und Auswahl seiner*

*Schriften*, etc., iv. 147, etc.). This spirit of Othniel was in the Minister Von Pfeil, in his life and work, confessing and praying. In his own words: —

"Knight of heaven Jesus made me,  
Touched me with the Spirit's sword,  
When the Spirit's voice declared me  
Free forever to the Lord."

STARKE: What great depravity of the human heart, that men so easily forget the true God whom they have known, and voluntarily accept and honor strange gods, whom neither they nor their fathers knew. THE SAME: God is at no loss for means; He prescribes bounds to the aggressions of the enemy. But in the spiritual warfare also men must be bold. We do not conquer by sitting still. LISCO: The spirit of the Lord is the originator of everything good and of all great achievements.

[HENRY: Affliction makes those cry to God with importunity, who before would scarcely speak to him. THE SAME: Othniel first judged Israel, reproved them, called them to an account for their sins, and reformed them, and then went out to war; that was the right method. Let sin at home be conquered, that worst of enemies, and then enemies abroad will be more easily dealt with. BISHOP HALL: Othniel's life and Israel's innocence and peace ended together. How powerful the presence of one good man is in a church or state, is best found in his death. — TR.]

## SECOND SECTION.

THE SERVITUDE TO EGLON, KING OF MOAB. EHUD, THE JUDGE WITH THE DOUBLE-EDGED DAGGER. SHAMGAR, THE DELIVERER WITH THE OX-GOAD.

*Eglon, King of Moab, reduces Israel to servitude, and seizes on the City of Palms: they are delivered by Ehud, who destroys the oppressor.*

## CHAPTER III. 12-30.

- 12 And the children [sons] of Israel did evil again [continued to do evil] in the sight of the Lord [Jehovah]: and the Lord [Jehovah] strengthened [encouraged] Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done [did] evil in the sight of the Lord [Jehovah]. And he gathered unto him [having allied himself with] the children [sons] of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and [they] 14 possessed [took possession of] the city of palm-trees. So [And] the children [sons] 15 of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years. But when [And] the children [sons] of Israel cried unto the Lord [Jehovah], [and] the Lord [Jehovah] raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjaminite [Ben-jemini], a man left-handed [weak<sup>2</sup> of his right hand]: and by him the children [sons] of Israel 16 sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab.<sup>3</sup> But [And] Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit [gomed] length: and he did gird it under his 17 raiment upon his right thigh. And he brought the present unto Eglon king of Moab: 18 and Eglon was a very fat man. And when he had made an end to offer the present, 19 he sent away [dismissed<sup>4</sup>] the people that bare the present. But he himself turned again [turned back] from the quarries [Pesilim] that were by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand<sup>5</sup> unto thee, O king: who said, Keep [omit: keep] silence

- 20 And [thereupon] all that stood by him went out from him. And Ehud came [draw near] unto him; and he was sitting in a summer parlour [now he, i. e. the king, was sitting in the upper story of the cooling-house<sup>6</sup>], which he had for himself alone [his private apartment]: and Ehud said, I have a message from God [the Deity] unto thee. And
- 21 [Then] he arose out of his seat. And [immediately] Ehud put forth his left hand, and
- 22 took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly: And the haft also went in after the blade: and the fat closed upon [about] the blade, so that he could not [for he did not] draw the dagger out of his belly; and the dirt [the dagger<sup>7</sup>] came
- 23 out [behind]. Then [And] Ehud went forth through the porch [went upon the balcony], and shut the doors of the parlour [upper story] upon him [after him], and
- 24 locked them. When he was gone out, his [the king's] servants came; and when they saw that [and they looked, and] behold, the doors of the parlour [upper story] were locked, [and] they said, Surely [doubtless], he covereth his feet in his summer-
- 25 chamber [chamber of the cooling-house]. And they tarried till they were ashamed [waited very long]: and behold, he opened not [no one opened] the doors of the parlour [upper story], therefore they took a [the] key and opened them: and behold, their
- 26 lord was fallen down dead on the earth. And [But] Ehud [had] escaped while they tarried; and [had already] passed beyond the quarries [Pesilim], and
- 27 [had] escaped unto Seirath [Seirah]. And it came to pass when he was come [when he arrived], that he blew a [the] trumpet in the mountain [mountains] of Ephraim, and the children [sons] of Israel went down with him from the mount
- 28 [mountains], and he before them. And he said unto them, Follow [Hasten] after me: for the Lord [Jehovah] hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan toward Moab,
- 29 and suffered not a man to pass over. And they slew [smote] of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, all lusty,<sup>8</sup> and all men of valour: and there escaped not a
- 30 man. So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel: and the land had rest four-score years.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 12. — יָהִי: the same word is used Ex. iv. 21. etc., Josh. xi. 20; but is here, as Bachmann remarks, to be explained not by those passages, but by Ezek. xxx. 24. It implies here the impartation not so much of strength as of the consciousness of it. — Tr.]

[2 Ver. 15. — אָמַר: Dr. Cassel, *schwach*, weak. "Impeded" would be the better word. Against the opinion of some, that Ehud's right hand was either lamed or mutilated, Bachmann quotes the remark of Schmid that it would have been a breach of decorum to send such a physically imperfect person on an embassy to the king. It may be added that this explanation of אָמַר is at all events not to be thought of in the case of the 700 chosen men mentioned in ch. xx. 16 — Tr.]

[3 Ver. 15. — Dr. Cassel translates this clause: "when [als; i. e. Jehovah raised up Ehud as a deliverer, when] the sons of Israel sent a present by him to Eglon, the king of Moab." But it is altogether simpler and better to take the clause as an independent progressive sentence, as in the E. V. So Bachmann also. — Tr.]

[4 Ver. 18. — שָׁלַח: dismissed them by accompanying them part of the way back, cf. Gen. xli. 20; xviii. 16 etc. — Tr.]

[5 Ver. 19. — דְּבַר־סֵתֶר: Dr. Cassel translates, "a secret word." But "errand" is better; because like דְּבַר, it may be a word or message, or it may be a commission of a more active nature. Bachmann quotes Chyträus: *rem, negotium secretum habeo apud te agendum*. So, he goes on to remark, in ver. 20 "דְּבַר־יְהוָה לִי אֵלֶיךָ, is not necessarily, 'I have a word from God to say to thee;' but may mean, 'I have a commission from God to execute to thee.'" It would be preferable, therefore, to conform the English Version in ver. 20 to ver. 19, rather than the reverse. — Tr.]

[6 Ver. 20. — The rendering given above is Dr. Cassel's, except that he puts the verb (יָשַׁב) in the pluperfect, which can scarcely be approved. He translates פַּעֲלֵיתָ הַמְתָּחָה by *Obergeschoss des Kühlhauses*, which we can only represent by the awkward phrase: "upper story of the cooling-house." It would be better, however, to take הַמְתָּחָה as containing an adjective idea, descriptive of the 'atijah: "cool upper story." Cf. Bachmann. — Tr.]

[7 Ver. 22. — The term פְּתָשְׁדוֹן occurs only here, and is of exceedingly doubtful interpretation. Bachmann assumes that the מַחֲבֵל which precedes it has Ehud for its subject, and then — by a course of reasoning far too lengthy and intricate to be here discussed — comes to the conclusion that פְּתָשְׁדוֹן denotes a locality, which in the next verse is more definitely indicated by מְסֻבֵּי. The latter term, he thinks, is best understood "of the lattice-work by which the roof was inclosed, or rather of the inclosed platform of the roof itself." Accordingly he conceives the text to say that Ehud issued forth from Eglon's private apartment "upon the flat roof, more definitely upon the inclosed platform or gallery." — Tr.]

[8 Ver. 29. — Dr. Cassel: *angesehene Leute*, cf. the Commentary; but it seems better to hold fast to the E. <sup>7</sup> The expression is literally: "fat men," i. e. well-fed, lusty men, of great physical strength. So Bachmann also. — Tr.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Vers. 12-14. And Jehovah encouraged Eglon, king of Moab. The second attack on Israel came likewise from the east, but from a point much nearer home than that from which the first by Aram had come. A warlike prince of Moab had formed a league for the occasion with neighbors north and south of him. For the sons of Ammon dwelt beyond the Jordan, east of the Dead Sea, above the Moabites; while the hosts of Amalek roved lower down; to the southwest of Moab. Hitherto no actual conflict had occurred between Moab and Israel. But the order that "no Ammonite or Moabite shall enter into the congregation of Jehovah" (Dent. xxiii. 4 (3)), sufficiently marks the antagonism that existed between them. The Moabites longed for the excellent oasis of the City of Palms. Jericho, it is true, was destroyed; but the indestructible wealth of its splendid site attracted them. They surprised Israel, now become dull and incapable. Neither in the land of Benjamin, where the battle was fought, nor from the neighboring tribes of Judah and Ephraim, did they meet with any energetic resistance. From the words "and they took possession of," in connection with the following narrative, it appears that Eglon had fixed his residence in the City of Palms.<sup>1</sup> This renders it probable that Eglon was not the king of all Moab, (whose principal seat was in Rabbath Moab,) but a Moabitish chieftain, whom this successful expedition placed in possession of this fair territory west of the Jordan.

Ver. 15. And Jehovah raised them up a deliverer, Ehud, the son of Gera, a Ben-jemini, a man weak of his right hand. אֶחָדָהּ; for which the LXX. read אֶחָדָהּ, *Aod* (Jerome has *Eud*). It seems to me that the older derivation of this name from אֶחָדָהּ, giving it the sense of "one who praises," or "one who is praised" (*gloriam accipiens*, Jerome), is to be unqualifiedly preferred to the later, proposed by Fürst, from a conjectural root אֶחָדָהּ. אֶחָדָהּ is related to אֶחָדָהּ, as אֶחָדָהּ, to be bright, is to אֶחָדָהּ, and אֶחָדָהּ (Arabic, *Hārūn*) to אֶחָדָהּ. Elsewhere I have

already compared *hod* with the Sanskrit *vad*, अद्वा, अद्वा, उद्वा, and the Gothic *audags* (*Irene*, p. 6, note.) At all events, as Ehud belongs to *hod*, so such names as *Audo*, *Eudo*, *Heudo*, seem to belong to *audags* (cf. Fürstemann, *Namenbuch*, i. 162, 391).

He was a Ben-jemini, of the tribe of Benjamin, as the Targum expressly adds. When the son of Jacob was born, his dying mother named him Benoni, "son of my sorrow;" but his father, by way of euphemism, called him Ben-jamin, "son of good fortune" (Gen. xxxv. 18). *Jamin* came to signify "good fortune," only because it designated the right side. The inhabitants of the holy land had the sea (*jam*<sup>2</sup>) on the right, hence called

that side *jamin*, literally, sea-side; and the high lands of Aram (or *Shām*, cf. Magyar, *Altherth.*, p. 228) on the left, hence *seuol*, the left, from *Sām*. Different nations derived their expressions for right and left from conceptions peculiar to themselves. Thus *dextros* and *dexter*<sup>3</sup> are based on the idea of showing, pointing, with the right hand (δεικνυμαι); *sinister*, from *sinus*, on the action of laying the right hand on the side of the heart. The left hand has everywhere been regarded as the weaker, which, properly speaking, did not wield arms. When oriental custom placed the stranger on the left, it assigned him the seat of honor in so far as the left side seemed to be the weaker and less protected (cf. Xenoph. *Cyrop.* viii. 4; Meiners, *Ueber die Versch.* der *Menschennaturen*, ii. 588). From the idea of weakness, sprang such terms as *laids*, *lausus*, Ger. *link*, [Eng. left], because that side is harmless, smooth, and gentle (cf. *laevis*, *laevis*). Hence also the custom among Asiatic nations of inclining toward the left side, and resting on the left hand, when seated, (Meiners, iii. 213): the right hand was thus left free. It was by a euphemism that the name of Jacob's son was *Ben-jamin*. Among the Greeks also the "left" was euphemistically called *εὐαννύος*, good-omened, because it was wished to avoid the ominous *ἀριστερός*. A similar custom must have obtained in Israel, since just in the tribe of Benjamin there were, as we are informed Judg. xx. 16, large numbers of men who, like Ehud, were

אֶחָדָהּ יָד יְמִינֵהוּ, i. e. *left-handed*, — the sons of the right hand being thus most addicted to the use of the left. But for the very reason that it seems to have been a habit of the tribe to use the left hand, it cannot be supposed that אֶחָדָהּ is meant to indicate lameness of the right hand. The LXX. felt this when they rendered the phrase by *ἀμφιδέξις*, "double right-handed." The same consideration influenced those more recent scholars who instanced (as Serarius already did, p. 84) the Homeric Asteropæus, who fought with both hands. However, this also contradicts the spirit of the narrative, and, as the peculiarity occurs only in Benjamin, the name as well. Those *Ben-jemini*, who, like Ehud, use the left hand, do it in contrast with others, who make use of the right without any lameness in the left. That which Stobæus (*Eclogie Physicæ*, ed. Heeren, i. 52, 992) relates of certain African nations, might also be said of the Benjaminites: that they are "good and for the most part left-handed fighters (*ἀριστερομάχους*), and do with the left hand whatever others do with the right." These are manifestly the same tribes of whom Stephanus of Byzantium (ed. Westermann, p. 128) speaks as an Egyptian people near Ethiopia, and whom he styles *Εὐαννύται* (thus designating them, like Benjamin, by the euphemistic term for left-handed). Accordingly אֶחָדָהּ יָד יְמִינֵהוּ

means no more than "unpracticed, weak, awkward, with the right hand," as other people are with the left. They are such as among other of the mountains was the right, and the north side the left. The same idea prevailed among the Greeks. That in Roman augury "to the left" was more favorable than "to the right," originated only in another view of the object which was supposed to produce good fortune. The *free side* was the free side.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Benfey, *Griech. Grammat.*, i. 240.

<sup>1</sup> [It certainly appears that he had done so temporarily, but by no means that he had done so permanently. — Tr.]

<sup>2</sup> The importance of this observation has been overlooked with reference to other lands as well as Palestine. The general fact that the sea-side was the right side, has been constantly ignored. That was the reason why Jacob Grimm (*Gesch. der Deutschen Sprache*, p. 930, etc.) failed to understand why among the Indians, Romans, etc., the south side

nations the people frequently called *Linketatz*, *Link-fuss* [literally, "left-paw," "left-foot"] (Frisch, i. 516), in France *gauchier* [lit. "left-hander"; cf. the English *wack*, *gawk*, and their derivative forms]. It is remarkable that in the Roman legend the hero, who, like Ehud, undertakes to kill the enemy of his country, is also named Scevola, left-handed. The traditional explanation that he was so named because he burned his right hand, is not very suitable; he should in that case, be named "one-handed." Still, no one will agree with Niebuhr (*Röm. Gesch.*, i. 569), who, following Varro, proposed an altogether different derivation. The tradition must refer to an actually left-handed hero. *Scevas*, says Ulpian (*Digestor.*, lib. i. tit. 1, 12, 3), does not apply to one who is maimed; hence, he who cannot move the right hand is called *muticus*. As such a left-handed person we are to consider Laïus (Ἀδῖος), the father of Œdipus (Οἰδῖππος).

Ver. 16. And Ehud made him a dagger [German: Dolch] which had two edges, a gomed long. The word *dolch* [dagger, dirk] has passed over into the German, from the Slavic, since the sixteenth century, and was not yet known to Luther.<sup>1</sup> It answers to דָּבָר in this passage, better than "sword" would do, because it has become quite synonymous with *stichdegen* (dirk or poniard). Oriental daggers have always been double-edged and short-handed (ver. 22). *Gomed* is translated σπιθαμή by the Septuaginta. Among the Greeks, the σπιθαμή was half an ell, i. e. twelve digits or three fourths of a foot (cf. Böckh, *Metrol. Unters.*, p. 211). With this measure, *gomed*, in its general sense of *cubitus*, which is also given in the *garmida* of the Targum, corresponds. The dagger of Ehud was not curved, as the *sicce* usually were and as the daggers of the Bedouins still are (cf. Jos. Ant. xx. 10). Its length could only be such as was consistent with concealment.

And girded it under his raiment. "To the presence of Dionysius the Tyrant, glided Mæros, the dagger in his garment," sings our poet,<sup>2</sup> and is withal perfectly historical, even though the Fable (n. 257) of Hyginus does not expressly say this. With such daggers in their garments the Sacerii raged among the crowds at the fall of Jerusalem. Prudentius (*Psychomachia*, 689) sings of *Discordia*: "*sicam sub veste tegit!*" Rothari, the would-be murderer of the Longobard king Luitprand, wore coat of mail and a dagger beneath his clothing (Paulus Diaconus, *Hist. Lomb.* vi. 37). Ehud had to wear the dagger on his right side because he was left-handed. However, among German warriors who were not left-handed, the dagger was also frequently worn on the right, because the sword hung on the left, as may be seen in old pictures and on gravestones (Klemm, *Waffen und Werkzeuge*, Leipzig, 1854, p. 173).

Ver. 17. And Eglon was a very fat man. Considering the sense of אֲדִיָּס wherever it occurs in Scripture, there can be no doubt that it is intended here to express the corpulency of the king. The LXX. in giving ἀστεῖος, follow another interpretation. They do not (as Bochart thought, *Phaleg*, p. 534) take it as descriptive of a handsome

man, nor do they imagine that all *urbani*, on account of their comfortable mode of living, have a tendency to become fat (cf. Serarius, p. 87); but since the statement "and Eglon was a fat man" is closely connected with the narrative of the presentation of the gifts, they make it refer to the manner in which the king received the presents.<sup>3</sup> Ἀστεῖος is friendly, accessible (Plato, *Phaed.*, 116 b.). In Egypt, where the translators lived, it was probably still a matter of present experience, that presentations of tribute and gifts to the rulers did not always meet with a gracious reception.

Ver. 18. When the presentation of the present was over, he dismissed the people. Menschen (*Nov. Test. ex Talm.*, p. 971) very properly observes that דָּבָר, here employed to express the presentation of gifts to a king, is elsewhere used to denote the bringing of oblations to God, hence

דָּבָר, offering. It was not lawful to appear before an Asiatic king without bringing a gift<sup>4</sup> (Seneca, *Ep.* xvii.); only in this way, therefore, could Ehud inform himself of the situation and humor of the king. The presentation of gifts is a lengthy ceremony. The tenacious adherence of oriental nations to ancient customs, enables us to depict the present scene by the help of Persian descriptions of similar occasions. Our narrator properly speaks of the bearers of the present as אֲדִיָּס, the people; for the more numerous the persons who carried the gifts, the more honored was the king. "Fifty persons often bear what one man could easily carry," says Chardin (*Voyage*, iii. 217). At this ceremony Ehud had no opportunity to attempt anything, for he neither came near the king, nor saw him alone; nor yet was he willing, among so many bystanders, to involve his companions in the consequences of a possible failure. On the contrary, he accompanied them back to the borders, in order to be sure that he was alone when making the dangerous attempt. Whether he suffered or escaped, he wished to be unhindered by their presence, and also to appear as acting without their concurrence.

Ver. 19. But he himself turned back from the boundary-stones. This is evidently the sense in which אֲבָדָה is to be taken. אֲבָדָה is always a carved image, γλυπτόν. The entire number of instances in which this word is used by Scripture writers fails to suggest any reason for thinking here of "stone-quarries," a definition which moreover does not appear to harmonize with the locality. But as the connection implies that the borders of Eglon's territory, which he had wrenched from Israel, were at the *pesilim*, we must understand by them the posts, στήλαι, stones, lapides sacri, which marked the line. In consequence of the honors everywhere paid them, these were considered *Pesilim*, idol images, just as at a later time the *Hermes*, (ἑρμαῖες, heaps of stone) were prohibited as idolatrous objects (cf. *Aboda Sara*, *Mischua*, 4). With this, the interpretation of the Targum, אֲבָדָה, heaps of unheaven stones, may also be made to harmonize.<sup>5</sup> This border line was in the vicinity of

<sup>1</sup> This is the opinion of Grimm (*Deutsch. Wörterb.*, ii. 1222). However, the view of Klemm (*Waffen und Werkzeuge*, p. 172) may nevertheless serve to find the original etymology of the word. [Luther has *Schwert*, sword.—<sup>2</sup>B.]

<sup>3</sup> [Schiller, in his ballad entitled *Die Bürgschaft*.—Tr.]

<sup>4</sup> Hence they also translate אֲבָדָה by ἀστεῖος, Ex. ii. 2, where, to be sure, it rather signifies "beautiful."

<sup>5</sup> Transferred to God, Ex. xxiii. 15: "None shall appear before me empty."

<sup>6</sup> [To this interpretation of the *pesilim*, Bachmann (who agrees with our author in rejecting the commonly received "stone-quarries") objects that it is not in accordance with

Gilgal, which had not fallen into the hands of Moab. Ewald has rightly insisted upon it that Gilgal must have lain northeast of Jericho (*Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, ii. 317). That this was the relative position of Gilgal, and its direction from Jericho, has already received confirmation from the first chapter of our Book.

And said, I have a secret message. It could not be matter of surprise that Ehud did not make this request until his return. The ceremony of the public audience did not allow it to be made at that time. The presentation of the presents must have been so conducted as to impress the king with the conviction that Ehud was especially devoted to him. Signs of discontent and ill-will on the part of the subjugated people cannot have escaped the conqueror. The more highly would he value the devotion of one of the Israelitish leaders. That Ehud had sent his companions away, and had not returned until they had crossed the border, was easily explained as indicating that he had a matter to present in which he did not wish to be observed by them. All the more eager, therefore, was Eglon to hear that which Ehud seemed to hide from Israel. It was only by such a feint that Ehud could succeed in approaching the tyrant and obtaining a private interview. Israel's deliverer must first seem to be its betrayer. The same artifice has been used by others. When the Persians wished to destroy the pseudo-Smerdis, and doubtfully considered how they could pass the guards, Darius said that he would pretend to have a secret commission, concerning Persia, from his father to the king; adding, as Herodotus (iii. 72) says: "For when lying is necessary, lie!"

Who said, Silence! Thereupon all that stood by him went out. Ehud does not demean himself as if he wished that those present would depart. He appears to be on the point of telling his secret before them all. But this Eglon will not permit. Oriental manners could not be more perfectly set forth. The king's injunction of silence (סָתַם, 'st!) on Ehud, is of itself a sufficient command to those present to leave the room. Eglon must therefore have expected matters not to be heard by all ears. All who "stood" about him, went out. They were his servants (ver. 24), who do not sit when the king is present. "Happy are these thy servants," says the queen of Sheba to Solomon, "who stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom." In the *Titinameh* (translated by Rosen, i. 42, 43) it is said: "The King of Khorassan was once sitting in his palace, and before his throne stood the pillars of the empire, the servants of the crown, high and low, great and small," etc.

Ver. 20. Now, he had seated himself in the upper story of the cooling-house. To understand what part of the house is thus indicated, we have only to attend to the description of oriental architecture given by Shaw, in his *Travels* (i. 386, Edinb. edit. 1808). Down to the present day many oriental houses have a smaller one annexed to them, which sometimes rises one story higher than the main building. In Arabic as in Hebrew this is called *alijah*, and serves for purposes of entire seclusion or rest. "There is a door of communication from it into the gallery of the

house, besides another which opens immediately from a privy stairs, down into the porch or street, without giving the least disturbance to the house."

The *alijah* of Eglon consisted of an inner chamber, opening on an exposed balcony (מִסְדָּרוֹן), from which a door led into the house itself (at present called *dor* or *bait*). Within the door of the *alijah* there was however still another apartment (חֲדָר, ver. 24), which served the purpose of a necessary-house. Being high and freely accessible to currents of air, the *alijah* was a cool retreat. Similar purposes were subserved in Germany by the *pergule*, balconies, galleries, arbors (*Lauben*), hence Luther's translation, *Sommer-laube* (summer-arbor or bower). He followed the rendering of the LXX. who have τῷ θερμῷ, while the Targum gives more prominence to the idea of repose (בֵּית מִנְיָט, כֹּלֵתָה). The public reception of the gifts had taken place in the house. Afterwards, while Ehud accompanied his companions, the king had betaken himself to the *alijah* "which was for himself alone" (his private chamber). When Ehud returned he was received there, as he had anticipated.

And Ehud said, I have a message from the Deity unto thee. Then he arose from his seat.

יְהוָה יִלְחֶמֶת is a commission from a higher being. He does not say Jehovah, for this is the name of the Israelitish God, with whom Eglon has nothing to do. We are not however to assume that the God of Eglon is meant; for what can Ehud the Israelite announce from Chemosh! It is therefore probable that by *Elohim* a superior prince is to be understood, whose liegeman or satrap Eglon was, as was already intimated above, — a human possessor of *majesty and authority*. As it is not to be supposed that the capital of Moab was transferred from Rabbah to the small bit of territory which had been acquired across the Jordan, Eglon in Jericho is not to be looked on as lord of all Moab. The relation in which he stood to the mother-country was most likely that of a vassal or fiefdom baron. That he is styled king does not contradict this. The potentates of single cities were all called "kings," as the Greeks called them *τίτῆρες*, without on that account being anything more than dependents of more powerful states and princes.<sup>1</sup> It suits the rôle which Ehud wishes to be ascribed to him, that he should also have relations with the transfluvial Moab, a fact which of course must be kept profoundly secret. Thus Eglon's rising is explained. The same honor was due to a message from the superior lord as to his presence. Like reverence was shown to royal letters even, as appears from the narrative of Herodotus concerning a message to Oroetes; and from it, the fidelity of those whom the message concerned was inferred (Herod. iii. 128). The same mark of honor was paid to parents and aged persons. From this custom the ecclesiastical usage of standing during the reading of the Gospel, is also to be derived.

Eglon rises out of respect for the יְהוָה יִלְחֶמֶת. This has been the constant explanation. The diverging view of Bertheau<sup>2</sup> does not commend itself. The Talmud — understanding the words,

self and those with him secure until he has passed the *pesilim*. — Tr.]

<sup>1</sup> Thus the king of Hazor was king paramount over all the kings of his vicinity (Josh. xi. 10).

<sup>2</sup> [Bertheau says: "Divining the purpose of Ehud, he rose up to defend himself." — Tr.]

he usual meaning of the word. He thinks that the *pesilim* were idolatrous images set up either by the apostate Israelites themselves, or by Eglon, "as boundary-marks of the territory immediately subject to him, and as signs of his supremacy." He seems inclined to prefer the latter alternative, because of "the fact that Ehud does not feel him-

however, of the God of Israel — already deduces from them the lesson, that if a stranger thus rose up to receive a message from God, much more is it the duty of an Israelite so to do (*Sanhedrin*, 50 a).

Vers. 21-24. Immediately Ehud put forth his left hand. Ehud made use of a pretext, in order to cause Eglon to rise. He was surer of his thrust if his victim stood. Eglon's attention must be wholly diverted, that the attack, entirely unresisted, might be the more effective. In such sudden assaults, bulky people like Eglon are at a disadvantage. Cimber pressed closely on Cæsar, as if to make most urgent entreaty for his brother (Plut., *Cæsar*, 86). Parmenio was stabbed by Cleander, while cheerfully reading a letter (Curtius, vii. 2. 27). The instance most like Eglon's case, is that of King Henry III. of France. Clement, to secure an interview, had provided himself with a commission from a friend of the king. When he arrived, the king was sitting on his close-stool. Hoping to hear of an understanding with his opponents, Henry bade the messenger draw near; whereupon the monk stabbed him in the abdomen (cf. Ranke, *Französ. Gesch.*, i. 171). Ehud's thrust, though left-handed, was powerful. The dagger, together with its short handle, buried itself in the fat of the man, and came out behind.

לֶהֱבִיחַ signifies a flame; then the blade of a sword, which glitters and burns like a flame. In a mediæval writing, the following words occur: "*Sin sicut flammieret an stner hant*" (Müller's *Mittelh. Wörterb.*, iii. 336). In technical language we also speak of flaming blades (*geflammeten klingen*).

And came out behind, הִפְּרִישְׁדָּהּ. The ancient doubt as to this word, which occurs but once, and about which opinions are still divided, appears from the divergent renderings of the Septuagint and the Targum. It is certain, however, in the first place, that the Greek rendering *προσθάδα*, can have little weight; for it arose from the similarity of the word in the text to פְּרִישְׁדָּהּ, current at the time, and meaning *προσθάς*, vestibule. In the second place, the addition of Ehud after the second לֶהֱבִיחַ (ver. 23), shows that another subject begins, and that therefore the first לֶהֱבִיחַ can refer only to the sword, not to the man. Further, since הִפְּרִישְׁדָּהּ is provided with ה local, it manifestly denotes that part of the body toward which the course of the sword was directed, while לֶהֱבִיחַ testifies to the actual perforation of the body. Now, as the sword was thrust from before into the abdomen (פְּרִישְׁדָּהּ), there would be no doubt as to the part where it emerged, even if the etymology, which has here to deal with an onomatopoeic word, did not make this perfectly plain. *Parshedon* is the Greek *παρασθός*, and belongs to the same family as the Lithuanian *persti*, Lettish *pirst*, Polish *pierzść*, Russian *perstjet*, Greek *πέρσθεις*, Sanscrit *pard*, Latin *pudere*, Gothic *fairtun*, Old High German *fēran* (cf. Pott, *Etymolog. Forsch.*, i. 245; Grimm, *Wörterb.*, iii. 1335). The sword emerged behind through the

fundament. The king fell down without uttering a sound. Ehud did not delay, but went out unhindered through the balcony. The attendants had entirely withdrawn from the *alijah*: Ehud takes advantage of this circumstance, and locks the door to it, in order to delay the moment of discovery. The heedless conduct of the unsuspecting attendants supports his boldness. As soon however as they see him go out, — an earlier return to their lord is not lawful, — they endeavor to enter the *alijah*. Ehud had gone away so calmly, that they suspect nothing. They are not even surprised when they find the doors fastened. Serarius has properly directed attention to the aversion felt by the ancients to the least degree of exposure when complying with the necessities of nature. This applies especially to kings, inasmuch as subjection to these necessities, too plainly proved them men. Of Pharaoh, the Jewish legend says that he wished to appear like a god, above the need of such things. "He covers his feet," is a euphemism, taken from the descent of the long garments (cf. Bochart, *Hieroicoicon*, i. 677).

Vers. 25-30. And they waited long, וַיִּשְׁכְּחוּ.

וַיִּשְׁכְּחוּ. These words add the notion of displeasure and ill humor to the idea of waiting (cf. 2 Kgs. ii. 17; viii. 11). At length they comprehend that something extraordinary must have taken place. They procure another key, with which they open the doors, and find their lord — dead. Ehud's artifice, however, had succeeded. While they delayed (וַיִּשְׁכְּחוּ), from שָׁכַח, *morari*, is onomatopoeic, he had got beyond the border, as far as Seirah. This place, which according to ver. 27 belonged to the mountains of Ephraim, is unknown. It bounded the territories of Benjamin on the north. Ehud reached it by way of the border which ran by Gilgal, which shows that both these places were north of Jericho. It is evident that he had agreed with the Israelites to give the signal there, in case he were successful. His trumpet-blast was transmitted among the mountains. Israel flocked together, and heard of the unprecedentedly fortunate deed. The people saw in it the firm resolve, which gives victory. The plan of battle had also been already determined by Ehud. It was of the last importance to cut the terrified and leaderless Moabites off from the assistance of their transjordanic friends. Hence, the first care of Israel is to seize the ford of the river. The ford in question was manifestly no other than that which, directly east of Jericho, half an hour north of Wady Heshban, is still in use. Setzen called it *el-Mökhtaa*, Robinson *el-Helu*<sup>2</sup> (Ritter xv. 484, 547, Gage's transl. iii. 4, 49). That the occupation of this ford decides the victory, proves clearly that Eglon was not king of all Moab, but only of the Moab on this side of the Jordan. It was a terrible retribution, a sort of "Sicilian vespers," which Israel, rising up after long subjection, inflicted on Eglon and his people. The falling foes were men of might. שֵׁשׁ אֲנָשִׁים expresses the distinction (*das Ansehn*)<sup>3</sup>, אֲנָשִׁים הַלָּזִים the warlike character and abilities, of the smitten enemies. Moab was

1 ["His sword flamed in his hand."] — Tr.]

2 [Robinson's map locates *El-Helu* not directly east, but southeast of Jericho, not north but south of Wady Heshban (cf. *Bibl. Res.* i. 535). It appears that the words "directly east" belong to Setzen, and must in Ritter's opinion be made to conform to Robinson's location of *El-Helu*. Cf. Gage's *Res. ter.* iii. 49. Van de Velde's map places *El-Helu*

southeast of Jericho, a short distance north of W. Heshban. — Tr.]

3 [BERTHEAU: "שֵׁשׁ אֲנָשִׁים, the six, i. e. (in contrast with persons of starved appearance) the well-fed and opulent man" — cf. Latin *opimus*; hence, the man of consequence." But compare note 8 under "Textual and Grammatical." — Tr.]

thoroughly vanquished, and Israel had rest for eighty years.

The exploit of Ehud doubtless surpasses all similar deeds of ancient history in the purity of its motive, as well as in the energy and boldness of its execution. Harmodius and Aristogiton, however celebrated by the Athenians, were moved to kill Hipparchus by private interests (cf. Thucyd. vi. 56). Blind warrior-fury fills Mucius Scaevola, as also Theodotus (Polyb. v. 81), the would-be murderer of Ptolemæus, and they fail of success. Ehud was equally bold and pure. He risked his life for no interest of his own, but for his people. And not merely for the external freedom of his nation, but for the maintenance and honor of its divine religion, which was inseparably linked with freedom. It was against the mortal enemy of Israel—against one lying under the ban, and shut out from the congregation of Israel—that he lifted up his sword. He exposed himself to a fearful peril, in order, if successful, to give therewith a signal of courage and comfort to his people. To be sure, if he did not succeed, the hatred and oppression of the enemy would increase in violence. But for that very reason men saw the more clearly that God had raised him up to be a deliverer. And yet, where in Israel are those praises of Ehud, which in Athens resounded for centuries in honor of Harmodius? Scaevola's deed is celebrated as one of the nation's heroic performances. The historian makes him say (Livy, xi. 12): "As an enemy have I slain the enemy." It is true, the remarkable act has had the honor of being minutely handed down, even to the least details of its progress. But all this was to point out the sagacity and energy of the strong left-handed man. Not one word of praise is found. On the contrary—and this fact deserves attention—the remark usually made of other Judges, is here wanting: it is not said that "the Spirit of Jehovah was upon him." Nor is it said, as of Othniel, that he "judged Israel." Neither are we told that the rest and peace of Israel were connected with his life and death. Subsequent exegesis called him the Wolf, with which Benjamin is compared (*Midrash, Ber. Rabba*, cap. 89, p. 87 a). As the wolf throws himself on his prey, so had Ehud thrown himself on Eglon. They saw in Ehud's deed the act of a mighty man, influenced by zeal for God; but the "Spirit of Jehovah" inspires neither such artifice nor such murder. So much the less could the act of Ehud, however brilliant under the circumstances, be made to exculpate similar deeds. So much the less could the crimes that defile the pages of Christian history, such as those committed against Henry III. and Henry IV., use it as a cover for themselves.<sup>2</sup> Although Eglon was a heathen, a foreigner, a tyrant, an enemy actually engaged in

hostilities, the Scripture speaks of Ehud only as a deliverer, but never of his deed as sprung from the Spirit of God. How much more disgraceful are murder and treason against one's own king, countrymen, and fellow Christians! It was an insult to Christianity, a sin against the Holy Ghost when in answer to Clement's question, whether a priest might kill a tyrant, it was determined that "it was not a mortal sin, but only an irregularity" (Ranke, *Franz. Gesch.*, i. 473); or when Pope Paul V. exclaimed, with reference to the murder of Henry IV. by Ravaillac: "*Deus gentium fecit hoc, quin datus in reprobum sensum.*" Worse than the dagger is such doctrine.<sup>3</sup>

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Ehud, the Judge with the two-edged sword.—1. Israel was again in bondage on account of sin. And the compassion of God was not exhausted, although no deliverer came out of Judah. In the kingdom of God, the great and rich may indeed become instruments of God's will; but his power is not confined to them. If no one arises in Judah, some one in Benjamin does. If it be not Othniel, Caleb's nephew, it is some unknown person who comes to rescue his people. Neither the name, nor the physique, is material. Deliverance may be begun with the left hand.

2. Ehud kills Eglon, the tyrant of Israel; yet he is not properly a murderer, but only a warrior. However, it is better to conquer as Othniel and Gideon conquered. He did it, not for private revenge, nor from fanaticism, but for the just freedom of Israel and its religion. He did it against Moab, and not against one who shared his own faith and country. God raised him up; but yet the Word of God does not approve his deed. He was a deliverer of Israel; but there hangs a shadow nevertheless over his official activity. Therefore, no murderous passion can appeal to him. By him no tyrant-murder, no political assassination, is excused. And this not simply because in Christian states and churches there can be no Eglons or Moabs.—STARKE: "The Jesuit principle that it is right to put an heretical prince out of the way, will never be valid until a person can be certain of having such a calling from God to it, as Ehud undoubtedly had."—His cause was pure; which cannot be said of any other assassination in history,—Christian history not excepted,—down to the murder of the North American President Lincoln; not even of those instances which remind us (as Mallet, *Altes und Neues*, p. 92, so beautifully did with reference to G. Sand, the murderer of Kotzebue) of the words of the Lord: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

GERLACH: We are not to think that the deed

<sup>1</sup> In Plutarch's *Parallels of Greek and Roman History* (n. 2), the same history is given of a Greek, Neocles, who made an attempt against Xerxes like that of Scaevola against Porseus.

<sup>2</sup> Excellent remarks are found in the work of Hugo Grotius, *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, lib. i. cap. iv. (ed. Traj., 1773), p. 178. Serarius declines to treat the subject, under the feeble pretext of lack of time, p. 92. (Compare Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, s. v. *Mariana*, li. 2051, e.)

<sup>3</sup> WORDSWORTH: "Some have raised objections to this act of Ehud, as censurable on moral grounds: and they have described him as a 'crafty Israelite,' taking no unfair advantage over an unwieldy corpulent Moabite; others have apologized for it, on the plea that it is not to be measured by what we call the standard of our 'enlightened modern

civilization' compared with what they term the 'barbarous temper of those times.' But surely these are low and unworthy motives." He then quotes with approbation from Bp. Sanderson the words of Dr. Waterland, the gist of whose remarks (Sanderson's however being made with immediate reference to the act of Phineas, Num. xxv.) is, that the Lord raised up deliverers for Israel, and divinely warranted their actions, which actions, however, form no precedents for those who have not similar divine authority. But it is surely not an improper question to ask, whether, when God raised up a hero, endowed him with faith and zeal, with strength and energy, to secure certain results. He also, always and necessarily, suggested or even approved the method adopted not only as a whole but even in detail.—TA.



of Ehud, in the manner of its accomplishment, is set before us as an example; but we must also beware lest, because the manner is no longer allowable, we be led to deny the operation of the Holy Ghost by whom this deliverer of his people was impelled.

3. Because Ehud's cause was pure, his deed was followed by peace and freedom. That can be said of no other similar deed. He first searched out the enemy in his hiding-place, and then triumphed over him in the battlefield. He shows himself, — 1, a true Israelite by faith; 2, a true son of Benjamin, who was compared with the wolf, by his

strength. He drew his sword, not for the sake of war, but of peace. Therefore, Israel had peace through him until he died.

Ehud may not improperly be considered a type in spirit of him who likewise sprang from Benjamin — of Saul who first ravened like a wolf, but became patient and trustful like a lamb; of the Apostle who called the Word of God a two-edged sword that pierces through the conscience; of Paul, whose symbol in the church is the sword through which as martyr he lost his own life, after he had saved the lives of thousands by the sword of the Spirit.

### *Shamgar smites six hundred Philistines with an ox-goad.*

#### CHAPTER III. 31.

31 And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which [and he] slew [smote] of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox-goad; and he also [he, too,] delivered Israel.

#### EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

**After him.** After his example. Following Ehud's example,<sup>1</sup> Shamgar smote the Philistines. That the expression is not to be taken of time, as if on the death of Ehud Shamgar had succeeded him, is evident from ch. iv. 1. Moreover, if that were the meaning, a statement of the years of Shamgar would not be absent. The hypothesis of Josephus, that he governed one year, is untenable. Accordingly, the other Jewish expositors have properly assigned the exploit of Shamgar to the time of Ehud, *i. e.* to the period of eighty years.

**Shamgar,**<sup>2</sup> the son of Anath. To what tribe he belonged, is not stated. If it be correct to connect עֲנַת with עֲנָתוֹת, Anathoth (cf. Kaplan, *Erets Kedumim*, ii. 142), it will follow that like Ehud he was of Benjamin, and defended the territory of that tribe in the west against the Philistines, as Ehud did in the east against the Moabites. His whole history, as here given, consists of a single heroic exploit, in which he repulsed an attack of the Philistines with extraordinary strength.<sup>3</sup>

**With an ox-goad.** The Septuagint gives ἀροτροπούς, by which it evidently means the plough-

handle, *stiva*, that part which the ploughman holds in his hand, and with which he guides the plough.<sup>4</sup> More correct, however, is the rendering "ox-goad" (cf. Bochart, *Hierozyicon*, i. 385);

פָּרֶשׁ הַנֶּרֶץ, as the Targum has it. It was the "prick" against which the oxen "kicked," when struck with it. The Greeks called it βουπλήξ. With such an instrument, King Lycurgus is said to have attacked the wandering Bacchus and his followers<sup>5</sup> (*Il.* vi. 135). There is a tradition in Holstein that in the Swedish time a peasant armed with a pole put to flight a multitude of Swedes who had entered his house and threatened to burn it (Müllenhoff, *Sagen*, etc., p. 81).

**He delivered Israel.** He procured victory for them, and assisted them over the danger of present and local subjugation. But to "deliver" is not to "judge." Nor is there any mention of the "Spirit of the Lord" in connection with him.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Shamgar the deliverer with the ox-goad. Courageous examples find worthy followers. Shamgar

1 [Bachmann observes that this and similar interpretations of this expression, militate against the analogy of ch. x. 1, 3; xii. 8, 11, 13, in all which passages שָׁמַר refers to the duration of the official or natural life of the previously mentioned person. Appealing to ch. v. 6, where the "days of Shamgar" are described in such a way as to exclude the supposition that they belonged to the period of "rest" obtained by Ehud, he makes them synchronous with some part of the Canaanite oppression under Jabin. While the Canaanites subjugated the northern part of the land, the Philistines attempted to extend their power in the south, which occasioned the conflicts of Shamgar with them. — Tr.]

2 שָׁמְגָר. The ancients translated it: *Nomen Advenæ*, "Name of a stranger." Ehud was the son of a certain נֶגְבִי. Perhaps Shamgar also is somehow related to that name.

3 [BACHMANN: "We are undoubtedly to think here of a marauding band like those brought to view in 1 Sam. xxx. 1 ff. and Job i. 15, against whom Shamgar, either engaged at the moment in ploughing, or else seizing the first weapon that came to hand, proceeded with an ox-goad, with such effect as to strike down six hundred of them." — Tr.]

4 This interpretation of the LXX. has nothing to do (as Bertheau thinks) with the reading הַפָּרֶשׁ הַנֶּרֶץ, found by Augustine.

5 This legend is copiously treated by Nonnus, on the basis of Homer's version of it. It is remarkable that although the scene is laid in "Arabia," Nonnus nevertheless transfers the above-mentioned event and the city of Lycurgus to Carmel and the Erythraean Sea. It is doubtless true, as Köhler observes (*Die L'vonsiaka von Nonnus von Panopolis*, Halle, 1853, pp. 76-77), that by βουπλήξ Nonnus appears to have understood an *oze*. The Roman poets also give an axe to Lycurgus.



trode in Ehud's footsteps. One triumphs with a sword, the other with an implement of peace. Hence we may infer, says Origen, that a judge of the church need not always carry a sword, and be full of severity and admonitions to repentance, but should also be like a husbandman, "who, gradually opening the earth with his plough, prepares it for the reception of good seed."

STARKE: When God wishes to terrify the enemy, He needs not many men, nor strong defence and preparation for the purpose. — GERLACH: Shamgar's deed is probably to be viewed only as the effect of a sudden outbreak of holy enthusiasm, under the influence of which he seized the first best

weapon, and put to flight the enemy whom some terror from God had seared.

[HENRY: 1. God can make those eminently serviceable to his glory and the church's good, whose extraction, education, and employment are very obscure. He that has the residue of the Spirit, could, when he pleased, make ploughmen judges and generals, and fishermen apostles. 2. It is no matter what the weapon is, if God direct and strengthen the arm. An ox-goad, when God pleases, shall do more than Goliath's sword. And sometimes He chooses to work by such unlikely means, that the excellency of the power may appear to be of God. — TR.]

### THIRD SECTION.

THE SERVITUDE TO JABIN, KING OF CANAAN. DEBORAH, THE FEMALE JUDGE OF FIERY SPIRIT,  
AND BARAK, THE MILITARY HERO.

*Ehud being dead, Israel falls back into evil-doing, and is given up to the tyranny of Jabin, king of Canaan. Deborah, the Prophetess, summons Barak to undertake the work of deliverance.*

### CHAPTER IV. 1-11.

- 1 And the children [sons] of Israel again did [continued to do] evil in the sight
- 2 of the Lord [Jehovah;] when [and] Ehud was dead. And the Lord [Jehovah] sold them [gave them up] into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan that reigned in Hazor, the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Genneseths [Harosheth-Hagojim]. And the children [sons] of Israel cried unto the Lord [Jehovah]; for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily
- 3 oppressed the children [sons] of Israel. And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth,<sup>1</sup> she judged Israel at that time. And she dwelt [sat<sup>2</sup>] under the palm-tree of Deborah, between Ramah and Beth-el in mount Ephraim: and the children [sons]
- 4 of Israel came up to her for judgment. And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the Lord [Jehovah] the God of Israel commanded [thee], saying, Go, and draw toward mount Tabor,<sup>3</sup> and take with thee ten thousand men of the children [sons] of Naphtali, and of the
- 5 children [sons] of Zebulun? And I will draw unto thee, to the river [brook] Kishon, Sisera the captain of Jabin's army, with<sup>4</sup> his chariots and his multitude;
- 6 and I will deliver him into thine hand? And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go. And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding [but] the journey that thou takest [the expedition on which thou goest] shall not be for thine honour; for the Lord [Jehovah] shall sell [give up] Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah
- 7 arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh. And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet:<sup>5</sup> and Deborah went
- 8 up with him. Now Heber the Kenite, which was of the children [sons] of Holam the father- [brother-] in-law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaïm [near Elon-Zaanannim], which is by Kedesh.<sup>6</sup>

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 4 — אִשְׁתּוֹ לִפְדּוֹת: Dr. Cassel, taking the second of these words as an appellative, renders, — *ein Weib von Feuergeist*, a woman of fiery spirit, cf. his remarks below. The possibility of this rendering cannot be denied; but

it is at least equally probable that the ordinary view which regards Lapidoth as a proper noun is correct. Bachmann points out that the succession of statements in this passage is exactly the same as in "Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aarou," "Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum," "Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phaeuel," etc. These instances create a presumption that in this case too the second statement after the name will be one of family relationship, which in the absence of positive proof the mere grammatical possibility of another view does not suffice to counter-vail. The feminine ending of Lapidoth creates as little difficulty as it does in Naboth, and other instances of the same sort. Of Lapidoth we have no knowledge whatever. The mention here made of him does not necessarily imply that he was still living. Cf. Ruth iv. 10; 1 Sam. xxvii. 3; etc. — Ta.]

[2 Ver. 5. — יוֹשֵׁבֶת: Bachmann also translates "sat" (sass), although he interprets "dwelt;" cf. ch. x. 1; Josh. ii. 15; 2 Kgs. xxii. 14. "As according to the last of these passages the prophetess Huldah had her dwelling (יָוִינָה) in the second district of Jerusalem, so the prophetess Deborah had her dwelling (יָוִינָה) under the Palm of Deborah." — Ta.]

[3 Ver. 6. — וַיִּשְׁכְּתָה בְּהַר תָּבוֹר: Dr. Cassel, — *Ziehe auf den Berg Tabor*, proceed to Mount Tabor. So many others. For ב with a verb of motion, cf. Ps. xxiv. 3. But inasmuch as מִשְׁכָּה recurs immediately in ver. 7, and is there transitive, Bachmann proposes to take it so here: go, draw *sc.* an army, to thyself or together, ou Mount Tabor. Cf. the Vulgate. — Ta.]

[4 Ver. 7. — וַיִּהְיֶה אִתּוֹ אֶחָד: properly, "and (not, with) his chariots," etc., although Cassel also has *mit*. אִתּוֹ is the sign of the accusative, not the preposition, as appears from the fact that it has the copula "and" before it. — Ta.]

[5 Ver. 10. — בְּרַגְלָיו: if the subject of וַיַּעַל be Barak, as the E. V. and Dr. Cassel take it, בְּרַגְלָיו can hardly mean anything else than "on foot," as Dr. Cassel renders it; cf. ver. 15. But the true construction — true, because regular and leaving nothing to be supplied — is that which De Wette adopts: "and there went up, בְּרַגְלָיו, ten thousand men." In this construction, which harmonizes perfectly with the context, בְּרַגְלָיו evidently means "at his feet," i. e. as De Wette renders, "after him." — Ta.]

[6 Ver. 11. — Dr. Cassel's translation adheres strictly to the order of the original: "And Heber, the Kenite, had severed himself from Kain, the sons of Hobab, the brother-in-law of Moses, and had pitched his tent near Elon-Zaanannim, by Kedesh. On the rendering "brother-in-law," instead of "father-in-law," cf. Keil, on Ex. ii. 18; Smith's *Bibl. Dict.* s. v. Hobab. — Ta.]

#### EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 1. And Ehud was dead: i. e. For Ehud was no more. That the eighty years of rest were also the years of Ehud's government is not indeed expressly stated, but seems nevertheless to be indicated in this verse. For "rest" is always coincident with "obedience towards God;" and obedience is maintained in Israel through the personal influence of the Judge. When he dies, the weakness of the people manifests itself anew. Hence, when we read that the people "continued to do evil, and Ehud was dead," this language must be understood to connect the cessation of rest with the death of Ehud. Shamgar — no mention being made of him here — must have performed his exploit some time during the eighty years. The standing expression וַיִּסְיֶי, "and they continued," is to be regarded as noting the continuance of that fickleness which obtains among the people when not led by a person of divine enthusiasm. They always enter afresh on courses whose inevitable issues they might long since have learned to know. The new generation learns nothing from the history of the past. "They continued," is, therefore, really equivalent to "they began anew."

Vers. 2, 3. And Jehovah gave them up into the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan, etc. Joshua already had been obliged to sustain a violent contest with a Jabin, king of Hazor. He commanded a confederation of tribes, whose frontier reached as far south as Dor (Tantira) on the coast, and the plains below the Sea of Tiberias. The battle of Jabin with Joshua took place at the waters of Merom (Lake Hulch); and from that fact alone Josephus inferred that "Hazor lay above (ὑπερ-εἶται) this sea." But its position was by no means

so close to the lake as Robinson (*Bibl. Res.*, iii. 365) wishes to locate it, which is altogether impossible. The course of Joshua makes it clear that it lay on the road from Lake Merom to Zidon. For in order to capture Hazor, Joshua turned back (וַיָּשָׁב Josh. xi. 10) from the pursuit. It appears from our passage, and also from Josh. xix. 37 that it must have been situated not very far from Kedesh, but in such a direction that from it the movements of Israel toward Tabor, on the line of Naphtali and Zebulun, could not be readily observed or hindered: that is to say, to the west of Kedesh. That its position cannot be determined by the similarity of modern names alone, is shown by the experience of Robinson, who successively rejected a Hazireh, a Tell Hazir, and el-Hazûry (for which Ritter had decided). For a capital of such importance as Hazor here and elsewhere appears to be, an elevated situation, commanding the lowlands (הַבְּלָחִים), must be assumed. It must have been a fortress supported by rich and fertile fields. These conditions are met by Tibnin, as is evident from Robinson's extended description of it (ii. 451 ff.; iii. 57 ff.). The similarity of name is not wanting: for the Crusaders must have had some reason for calling it Toronum. William of Tyre (*Hist. lib.* xi. 5; in *Gesta Dei Francorum*, p. 798) described the place as adorned with vineyards and trees, the land fertile and adapted for cultivation. It lies midway between Tyre and Pnacas, and is of immense importance for the control of the country. Robinson has justly remarked, that a fortress must have been on this spot long before the time of the Crusaders; nor does it raise any great difficulty that William of Tyre reckoned it to the tribe of Asher, on whose borders, at all events, it lay.<sup>1</sup> — The Jabin, king of Hazor, of our

[1 [Bachmann identifies "Hazor with Hazzûr or Hazireh, two hours W. of Bint Jebel, in the heart of Northern Galilee, on an acclivity with extensive ruins and a sepulchral vault of great antiquity," cf. Koh. iii. 62. He remarks

that for Tibnin nothing speaks except its importance from a military point of view, which of itself is not sufficient evidence. "The similarity of the mediæval name Toronum (= Hazor?) is wholly illusory." — Ta.]

passage, evidently cherished the design of regaining, in some favorable hour of Israelitish supineness, the territory taken from his ancestors by Joshua. With this object in view, his general-in-chief, Sisera, kept the languishing nation under discipline at another point. The name of Sisera's residence was Harosheth Hagojim. It may perhaps be possible to fix this hitherto wholly unknown place also. The power of the present Jabin must have extended as far as that of the earlier one (*i. e.* to Tantûra and the region south of the Sea of Tiberias); since otherwise the battle with Barak would not have been fought at the Kishon. Moreover, Naphtali, Zebulun, and Issachar were all interested in the war against him (ch. v. 15). This being the case, it is certainly probable that Sisera's residence was in this southern part of Jabin's dominions. Sisera was commander of an army dreaded chiefly for its nine hundred iron chariots. But these were of consequence only on level ground. That is the reason why, Josh. xvii. 16, such prominence is given to the fact that just those Canaanites who lived in the plains of Beth-shean (Beisân) and Jezreel, through which latter the Kishon flowed, had iron chariots. The name itself of Harosheth Hagojim suffices to suggest its connection with iron chariots. Harosheth (Heb. *Charosheth*) is the place where iron was worked (*charash*, the smith). It is only natural to look for it in the plains just named. But the residence of Sisera is called Harosheth Hagojim, the Harosheth of the *Gojim*. By *Gojim* we must understand a race different not only from Israel, but also from the Canaanite, Aram, Edom, Moab, etc. The Targum translates Harosheth Hagojim by fortress or city of the *Gojim* (פֶּרֶץ גִּוִּיִּם), and thus refers us to *Gelil Hagojim* (Isa. viii. 23 [E. V. ix. 1]), which is translated in the same way (גִּלְלֵי גִוִּיִּם stands

often for גִּלְלֵי, city). The prophet in the passage referred to, locates this *Gelil of the Gojim* on this side of the Jordan, in the neighborhood of the Lake of Tiberias. It is clearly erroneous to make this *Galilee Gentium* cover the whole district of Galilee; for that included Zebulun, Naphtali, and the shore of Lake Tiberias, which the prophet mentions separately. If it be proper to interpret the passage geographically, *Gelil Hagojim* must lie south of Lake Tiberias, where subsequently Galilee began. Joshua himself also conquered a king of the *Gojim* in "גִּלְלֵי" (Josh. xii. 23). From the position given to this king in the catalogue, no geographical inference can be drawn, since the enumeration is made without any regard to the situation of localities. The passage becomes clear only when גִּלְלֵי is taken as גִּלְלֵי, making Joshua victorious over the king of the *Gojim* in *Gelil*. Now, it cannot escape notice that among the kings conquered by Joshua, no king of Beth-shean is found, although in Josh. xvii. 16 this place appears so important, and its territory must have been conquered, and although the cities in the plain of Jezreel are named. The conjecture, therefore, is plausible that Beth-shean is represented by the king of the *Gojim*. Beth-shean was the start-

ing-point of the later Galilee (cf. Lightfoot, *Opera*, i. 216, etc.); it was the city of iron chariots; its population was always of a mixed character (Canaanites, *Gojim*, Jews, Judg. i. 27; *Chulin*, 6 b). From the date of the first Greek notices of it (in the Septuagint, Josephus, etc.; cf. Ritter, xv. 432 [Gage's Transl. ii. 335]), it appears under the name Scythopolis, city of the Scythians. On the question how this name originated, we are not to enter here. Thus much is certain, that it is not unsuitable to take the term Scythians as equivalent to *Gojim*; especially when we compare Gen. xiv. 1, where Tidal, king of the *Gojim*, is named in connection with Elam, Shinar, and Ellasar. Although our historical data are not sufficient to raise these probabilities to certainties, several considerations suggested by the narrative are of some weight. If Harosheth Hagojim is to be looked for in the vicinity of Beth-shean, the whole geography of the war becomes quite plain. Jabin and Sisera then occupy the decisive points at the extremities of the kingdom. The southern army of Sisera is the most oppressive to Israel, and its dislodgement is the main object. Barak is not to attack Hazor, for that is surrounded and supported by hostile populations, which it is impracticable as yet to drive out. Deborah's plan is to annihilate the tyrannical power, where it has established itself in the heart of Israel. Tabor is the central point, where Naphtali and Zebulun can conveniently assemble. A straight line from Kedesh to that mount, runs through the territories of both. Sisera must fight or allow himself to be cut off. His overthrow is Israel's freedom. His army is Jabin's only hold on those regions. Hence, Sisera's flight from the Kishon is northward, in order to reach Hazor. On the way, not far from either Hazor or Kedesh, his fate overtakes him.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 4. And Deborah a prophetic woman, אִשָּׁה נְבִיאָה. According to Num. xi. 25, the prophetic gift has its source in the "Spirit of Jehovah." Its office answers to its origin: it preaches God and speaks his praises. Cause and effect testify of each other. Every one, whether man or woman, may prophecy, on whom the "Spirit of Jehovah" comes. The prophetic state is a divine ecstasy, a high poetic enthusiasm (ἐκθουσιασμός, from *theos*), under the influence of which the praises of God are spoken. On this account, the prophet resembled at times the Greek *μαντῖς* (from *μαίνουμαι*); compare especially Jer. xxix. 26 (נְבִיאָה רִבְקָה); גִּלְלֵי, connected with *nabi*, in the same chapter, ver. 8, is actually rendered *μαντῖς* by the LXX.). In itself, however, both as to derivation and meaning, *naba*, *niba*, is to be compared with *πνεῦμα*. The prophet utters the *εἶπος*, in which the Spirit of Jehovah manifests itself; he declares the greatness and glory of God. He is a spokesman of God and for Him. Hence Aaron could be called the *nabi* of Moses (Ex. vii. 1). He was the ready organ of the spirit which resided in Moses. Doubtless, in the highest sense, Moses was himself the *nabi*. With him, God spake mouth to mouth, not in visions and dreams and enigmas (Num. xii. 6-8); not, that is, as He announced himself to Aaron and

1 [To our author's identification of Harosheth ha-Gojim with Beth-shean, Bachmann objects that the latter city is known by its usual name to the writer of Judges; cf. ch. i. 27. He is "inclined to adopt the view of Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, ch. xxix., who finds Harosheth in Harthieh, a hill or mound at the southeastern corner of the

Plain of Akka, close behind the hills that divide this plain from that of Jezreel, on the north side of the Kishon, yet so near the foot of Carmel as only to leave a passage for the river. This mound is covered with the remains of old ramparts and buildings."—TA.]

**Miriam.** Miriam was the first prophetess who praised God in ecstatic strains of poetry, with timbrels and dances, before all the people (Ex. xv. 20). It has been asked (cf. my treatise *Ueber Prophetinnen und Zauberinnen im Weimar, Jahrbuch für Deutsche Sprache*, vol. iv.), how it comes about that prophetic women constitute a "significant feature" of the old German heathenism only, whereas Jewish and Christian views assigned the gift of prophecy to men. The contrast certainly exists; it rests in the main upon the general difference between the heathen and the Scriptural view of the universe. The subjective nature of woman is more akin to the subjective character of heathenism. So much the higher must Deborah be placed. She was not, like Miriam, the sister of such men as Moses and Aaron. The objective spirit of her God alone elevates her above her people, above heroes before and after her. Not only the ecstasy of enthusiasm, but the calm wisdom of that Spirit which informs the law dwells in her. Of no Judge until Samuel is it expressly said that he was a "prophet." Of none until him can it be said, that he was possessed of the popular authority needful for the office of Judge, even before the decisive deed of his life. The position of Deborah in Israel is therefore a twofold testimony. The less commonly women were called to the office she exercised, the more manifest is the weakness of those who should have been the organs of divine impulses. That she, a woman, became the centre of the people, proves the relaxation of spiritual and manly energy. But on the other hand, the undying might of divine truth, as delivered by Moses, comes brilliantly to view. History shows many instances, where in times of distress, when men despaired, women aroused and saved their nation; but in all such cases there must be an unextinguished spark of the old fire in the people themselves. Israel, formerly encouraged by the great exploit of a left-handed man, is now quickened by the glowing word of a noble woman.

The name Deborah does not occur here for the first time. It was also borne by the nurse of Rebecca, who was buried near Bethel (Gen. xxxv. 8). Many find the name peculiarly appropriate for the prophetess. Its proper meaning is, "bee"; and in Hellenic oracles also bees play an important part (cf. Paus. ix. 40, etc.). This honor they enjoyed, however, only in consequence of the erroneous derivation of the name *melitta* from *melos*, a song. In like manner, Deborah (דְּבוֹרָה), the

bee, is not connected with *dabar* (דָּבָר), to speak; nor does it properly mean the "march of the bees" (Gesenius); neither is it "buzzing" (First); but, as *melitta* from *meli*, honey, so Deborah is to be derived from *debash* (דְּבַשׁ), which also means honey, the interchange of *r* and *s* being very common (*honor, honos*, etc.). Deborah is a female name akin in meaning to the German Emma,<sup>1</sup> — and does not necessarily imply any reference to the prophetic office in the case of our Deborah any more than in that of Rebecca's nurse.

A woman of a fiery spirit, אִשָּׁת לַפִּידוֹת. The majority of expositors, ancient as well as modern, regard Lapidoth as the name of Deborah's husband. Yet it was felt by many that there was something peculiar in the words. If the ordi-

nary interpretation were the true one, it would be natural to look also for a statement of the tribe to which the husband belonged. In accordance with the style of the ancients, the designation would have been at least once repeated (at ch. v. 1). To make it seem quite natural for Deborah always to appear without her husband, it had to be assumed that he was already dead. To avoid this, some old Jewish expositors assert that Barak was her husband, — Barak and Lappid being of kindred signification, namely, "lightning" and "flame." But in all this no attention is paid to the uncommonness of the phenomenon presented in the person of a woman such as Deborah. What a burning spirit must hers have been, to have attained to such distinction in Israel! It was in perfect keeping with the poetical cast of the language of the age, that the people should seek to indicate the characteristic which gave her her power over them, by calling her אִשָּׁת לַפִּידוֹת. If a capable woman

was called אִשָּׁת חַיִל, from חַיִל, strength (Prov. xxxi. 10), — and a contentious woman, אִשָּׁת

אִשָּׁת פְּסִילוֹת (Prov. xxi. 19); and if in אִשָּׁת פְּסִילוֹת (foolish woman, Prov. ix. 13), we are not to regard *kesiluth* as a proper name, it must also be allowed

that אִשָּׁת לַפִּידוֹת may be rendered "woman of the torch-glow," especially when we consider what a fire-bearing, life-kindling personage she was. It is a fact, moreover, that *lappid* (torch) occurs almost as often in figurative as in literal language. The salvation of Jerusalem shines "like a torch" (Isa. lxii. 1). "Out of his mouth torches go forth" (Job xli. 11 (19)). The appearance of the heroes of Israel is "like torches" (Nah. ii. 5 (4)). The angel who appeared to Daniel had "eyes like torches of fire" (Dan. x. 6). "The word of Elias," says Sirach (xlviii. 1), "burned like a torch." Concerning Phinehas, the priest, the Midrash says, that "when the Holy Ghost filled him, his countenance glowed like torches" (*Jalkut, Judges*, § 40).

The spirit of Deborah was like a torch for Israel, kindling their languid hearts. It was the power of her prophetic breath which fell on the people. This is the secret of her influence and victory. The moral energy which was at work is traced to its source even in the grammatical form of the word which describes it — לַפִּידוֹת, not לְפִידִים, albeit that the former, like פְּסִילוֹת occurs but once.

She judged Israel. Inasmuch as in the gift of prophecy she had the Spirit of God, she was able to judge. Notwithstanding her rapt and flaming spirit, she was no fanatic. She judged the thronging people according to the principles of the law. The wisdom of this "wise woman" was the wisdom revealed by God in his law. She deals in no mysterious and awful terrors. The מִשְׁפָּטִים (judgment), for which Israel came to Deborah, was clear — did not consist in dark sayings, like the verses of the Pythia, though these also were called θεμασ-  
τες, θέματα (statutes, מִשְׁפָּטִים; cf. Nägelsbach, *Nachhom. Theologie*, p. 183). The comparison with the Sphinx, instituted by Bochart (*Phaleg*, p. 471), was not fortunate; not even according to the notions of the grammarian Socrates, who repre-

<sup>1</sup> [From the same root with *emsig*, industrious, and *emise*, emmet, ant — Tr.]

<sup>2</sup> [That is, apparently, the energy proceeds from a woman,

and therefore the word which figuratively characterizes it, has, by a sort of attraction, a feminine, not masculine plural given it. — Tr.]

sented the Sphinx as a native soothsayer, who occasioned much harm because the Thebans did not understand her statutes (cf. Jaep, *Die griechische Sphinx*, p. 15).

Ver. 5. She sat under the palm-tree of Deborah. Under the palm still known to the narrator as that of Deborah (cf. "Luther's oak," in Thüringia). It is impossible to see why C. Böttcher (*Ueber den Baumkultus der Hellenen*, p. 523) should speak of "Deborah-palms." She sat under a large palm, public and free, accessible to all; not like the German Velleda, who, according to Tacitus, sat in a tower, and to whom no one was admitted, in order to increase the veneration in which she was held. The palm was the common symbol of all Canaan; it adorned the coins of both the Phœnicians (Movers, ii. 1, 7) and the Jews.<sup>1</sup> From these coins, carried far and wide by sailors — and not, as is generally assumed, from the appearance of the coast when approached from sea, which showed many other things besides palm-trees, — arose the custom of calling those who brought them Phœnicians (*φοινῖς*, the palm). The symbolism of the palm, which the ancients admired in Delos, was based on ideas which were unknown to Israel. It referred to the birth of Apollo, not to divination.

Between ha-Ramah and Beth-el, on Mount Ephraim.<sup>2</sup> Beth-el lay on the border between Ephraim and Benjamin; so likewise Ataroth (Josh. xvi. 2). Robinson discovered an *Atara* in that region (*Bibl. Res.*, i. 575). Not far from it, he came to a place, called er-Rām, lying on a high hill, which he regarded as the Ramah in Benjamin (Judg. xix. 13), while Ritter (xvi. 537, 538 [Gage's Transl. iv. 230]), identifies it with the Ramah of our passage. Both conjectures are tenable, since neither interferes with the statement that Deborah sat between Beth-el and Ramah, on Mount Ephraim, — on the border, of course, like Bethel itself (cf. *בֵּיתֵל*, Josh. xvi. 1).

Vers. 6, 7. And she sent and called Barak out of Kedesh-naphtali. That which especially comes to view here, is the moral unity in which the tribes still continued to be bound together. Deborah, though resident in the south of Ephraim, had her eyes fixed on the tyranny which pressed especially on the tribes of the north. While of the priests at Shiloh none speak, she nevertheless cannot rest while Israel is in bondage. But she turns to the tribes most immediately concerned. Kedesh, to the northwest of Lake Huleh, has been identified in modern times, still bearing its old name. It is situated upon a rather high ridge, in a splendid region (Rob. iii. 366 ff.). There, in Naphtali, lived Barak ("lightning," like Barea), the man fixed on by Deborah to become the liberator of his people. The names of his father and native place are carefully given, here, and again at ch. v. 1. The power of Deborah's influence shows itself in the fact that Barak, though living so far north, readily answers her summons to the border of Benjamin. At the same time, Barak's obedience to the call of the prophetess, is in itself good evidence, that he is the called deliverer of Israel. But she not only calls him, not only incites him to the conflict; she

also gives him the plan of battle which he must follow.

Go, and gradually draw toward Mount Tabor, with ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun (*וַיֵּצֵא בָרָק עֶשְׂרִים אֶלֶף אִישׁ מִנַּפְתָּלִי וּמִזְבּוּלֹן*).

The word *וַיֵּצֵא* always conveys the idea of drawing, whether that which is drawn be the bow, the furrow, or the prolonged sounds of a musical instrument; tropically, it is also used of the long line of an army, advancing along the plain. Its meaning here, where the object which Barak is to draw is put in another clause, "*וַיֵּצֵא בָרָק עֶשְׂרִים אֶלֶף אִישׁ*," is made plain by the analogous passage, Ex. xii

21. There Moses says, *וַיֵּצֵא בָרָק עֶשְׂרִים אֶלֶף אִישׁ*; and the sense is evidently that the families are to sacrifice the passover one after another (*מִשְׁכָּנֵהוֹם*), each in its turn killing its own lamb. The same successive method is here enjoined by Deborah. Barak is to gather ten thousand men toward Mount Tabor, one after another, in small squads. This interpretation of the word is strengthened by the obvious necessity of the case. The tyrant must hear nothing of the rising, until the hosts are assembled; but how can their movements be concealed, unless they move in small companies? For the same reason they are to assemble, not at Kedesh, but at a central point, readily accessible to the several tribes. Mount Tabor (*Jebel Tor*), southwest of the Sea of Tiberias, is the most isolated point of Galilee, rising in the form of a cone above the plain, and visible at a great distance, though its height is only 1755 (according to Schubert, 1748) Par. feet.<sup>3</sup> Barak, however, is not to remain in his position on the mountain. If Sisera's tyranny is to be broken, its forces must be defeated in the plain; for there the iron chariots of the enemy have their field of action. Hence, Deborah adds that Sisera will collect his army at the brook Kishon, in the plain of Jezreel. "And I" — she speaks in the "Spirit of Jehovah" — "will draw him unto thee, and deliver him into thine hand."

Ver. 8. And Barak said. Barak has no doubt as to the truth of her words, nor does he fear the enemy; but yet he will go only if Deborah go with him, not without her. Her presence legitimizes the undertaking as divine. It shows the tribes he summons, that he seeks no interest of his own — that it is *she* who summons them. He wishes to stand forth as the executor merely of the command which comes through her. The attempt to draw a parallel between Deborah and Jeanne d'Arc, though it readily suggests itself, will only teach us to estimate the more clearly the peculiar character of the Jewish prophethood. The latter does not herself draw the sword, for then she would not have needed Barak. Joan, like Deborah, spoke pregnant words of truth, as when, on being told that "God could conquer without soldiers," she simply replied, "the soldiers will fight, and then God will give victory;" but she fought only against the enemies of her country, not the enemies of her faith and spiritual life. It was a romantic faith in

<sup>1</sup> [STANLEY (*Jewish Church*, i. 352): "On the coins of the Roman Empire, Judæa is represented as a woman seated under a palm-tree, captive and weeping. It is the contrast of that figure which will best place before us the character and call of Deborah. It is the same Judean palm under whose shadow she sits, but not with downcast eyes, and folded hands, and extinguished hopes, with all the fire of

faith and energy, eager for the battle, confident of the victory." — Tr.]

<sup>2</sup> The rendering of the Targum here is quite remarkable: "And she sat in the city, in Ataroth Deborah."

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Ritter, xv. 393 [Gage's Transl. ii. 311; also Rob. ii. 351 ff.]

the right and truth of an earthly sceptre, for which the poor maiden fell: the voice which called Deborah to victory was the voice of the Universal Sovereign. No trace of sentimentalism, like that of Dunois, can be discovered in Barak; nevertheless, he voluntarily retires behind the authority of a woman, because God animates and inspires her.

Vers. 9, 10. She said: the expedition on which thou goest, shall not be for thine honour; for Jehovah will give Sisera into the hand of a woman. The victory will be ascribed, not to Barak, but to Deborah. It will be said, "a woman conquered Sisera." This is the first and obvious meaning of the words;<sup>1</sup> by the deed of Jael they were fulfilled in yet another sense. The honor of hewing down Sisera did not fall to Barak. Nevertheless, Barak insists on his condition. He will have the conflict sanctified by her presence. Something similar appears in Greek tradition: with reference to a battle in the Messenian war it is said (Paus. iv. 16), that "the soldiers fought bravely, because their Seers were present."

And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh. For the sake of the great national cause, she leaves her peaceful palm; and by her readiness to share in every danger, evidences the truth of her announcements. Kedesh, Barak's home, is the place from which directions are to be issued to the adjacent tribes. Thither she accompanies him; and thence he sends out his call to arms. Some authority for this purpose, he must have had long before: it is now supported by the sanction of the prophetess. When it is said, that he "called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh," it is evident that only the leaders are intended. It cannot be supposed that the troops, in whole or in part, were first marched up to Kedesh, and then back again, southward, to Tabor. In Kedesh, he imparts the plan to the heads of families. Led by these, the troops collect, descending on all sides from their mountains, like the Swiss against Austria, and proceed towards Tabor—"on foot"

(פַּרְשָׁיִם), for they have neither chariots nor cavalry. Their numbers constantly augment, till they arrive on Tabor,—Barak and Deborah always at their head.

Ver. 11. And Heber, the Kenite, had severed himself from Kain, the sons of Hobab, the brother-in-law of Moses. We read above that the tribe of the Kenite, the father-in-law of Moses, decamped from Jericho with the tribe of Judah (ch. i. 16), and, while the latter carried on the war of conquest, settled in Arad. From there the family of Heber has separated itself. While one part of the tribe has sought a new home for itself below, in the extreme south of Judah, the other encamps high up, in the territory of Naphtali. It is as if the touching attachment of this people to Israel still kept them located at the extremities of the Israelitish encampment, in order,

as of old, to show them the way. Above, ch. i. 16 they are called "sons of the Kenite, the father-in-law of Moses"; here, "Kain (cf. Num. xxiv. 22) the sons of Hobab, the brother-in-law of Moses." Ancient expositions<sup>2</sup> have been the occasion of

unnecessary confusion as to Jethro's name. קַיִן means to contract affinity by marriage; and, just as in German *Schwäher* (father-in-law) and *Schwager* (brother-in-law) are at bottom one, so the Hebrew קַיִן may stand for both father-in-law and brother-in-law. The father-in-law of Moses was Jethro; as priest, he was called Reuel (רְעוּאֵל). He did not accompany Israel, but after his visit to Moses, went back to his own land (Ex. xviii. 27). His son Hobab, however (Num. x. 29), had remained with Israel; and when he also would return home, Moses entreated him to abide with them, that he might be for eyes to them on the way, and promised him a share in whatever good might be in store for Israel. The proposal was accepted, and the promise was kept. In the north and south of Canaan, the Kenites had their seats. They are here designated "sons of Hobab," because it was from him, the ancient guide of Israel, that they derived their position in the land. Heber's tent was in the vicinity of Kedesh, near Elon Zaanannim,<sup>3</sup> mentioned also at Josh. xix. 33, as a place on the border of Naphtali. The name may have originated from the sojourn of the Kenites; a supposition which becomes necessary, if with an eye to Isa. xxxiii. 20,<sup>4</sup> it be interpreted to mean the "oak of the wandering tent."<sup>5</sup>

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Compare the reflections at the end of the next section.

[BISHOP HALL: It is no wonder if they, who, ere fourscore days after the law delivered, fell to idolatry alone; now, after four-score years since the law restored, fell to idolatry among the Canaanites. Peace could in a shorter time work looseness in any people. And if forty years after Othniel's deliverance they relapsed, what marvel is it, that in twice forty years after Ehud they thus miscarried?—THE SAME: Deborah had been no prophetess, if she durst have sent in her own name: her message is from Him that sent herself. "Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded?" Barak's answer is faithful, though conditional; and doth not so much intend a refusal to go without her, as a necessary bond of her presence with him. Who can blame him, that he would have a prophetess in his company? If the man had not been as holy as valiant, he would not have wished such society.—THE SAME: To prescribe that to others, which we draw back from doing ourselves, is an argument of hollowness and falsity. Barak shall see that Deborah doth not

1 [This is the first and obvious meaning of the words, and it is very strange that Bachmann should pronounce this interpretation, from which but for Jael no one would ever have dreamed of departing, impossible.—Tr.]

2 In giving Jethro seven names, homiletical applications were followed. Thus, Hobab was taken as a surname of Jethro, "because he was dear to God." (*Jalkut, Judges*, b. 38.)

3 To pitch one's tent "in the vicinity" of a place, is expressed by עַד: so here, עַד אֵלֶּן; so Gen. xxxviii. 1,

עַד-אֵישׁ עַדְלָמִי.

4 [Where, according to De Wette's translation, Jerusalem is spoken of as a "Zelt das nicht wandert"—a tent that does not wander.—Tr.]

5 The reading δρυὸς πλεονεκτοῦντων, found in some Greek versions, expounds יַעֲבֹקִים as if it came from

יַעֲבֹק; while the ἀναπανομένων of other versions give it the sense of יַעֲבֹק, which is so rendered, Jer. i. viii. 11

offer him that cup whereof she dares not begin: without regard of her sex, she marches with him to Mount Tabor, and rejoices to be seen of the ten thousand of Israel. — HENGSTENBERG (*Genuineness of the Pentateuch*, ii. 101): To grant succor through a woman was calculated to raise heavenwards the thoughts of men, which are so prone to cleave to the earth. If the honor was due to God alone, they would be more disposed to show their gratitude by sincere conversion. That Barak was obliged to lean on Deborah, depended on the same law by which Gideon was chosen to be the deliverer of Israel from the Midianites, though his family was the meanest in Manasseh, and himself the youngest in his father's house; that law by which Gideon was divinely directed to take only three hundred men from the whole assembled host; the women Deborah and Jael stand in the same category with the ox-goad of Shamgar. In all ages God is pleased to choose for his service the inconsiderable and the despised. — Tr.]

*The Battle of the Kishon. Sisera, defeated, seeks shelter in the tent of Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite, and is slain by her.*

## CHAPTER IV. 12-24.

12 And they shewed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to Mount  
13 Tabor. And Sisera gathered [called] together all his chariots [his whole chariot-force], *even* nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that *were* with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles [Harosheth Hagojim] unto the river [brook] of Kishon.  
14 And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this *is* the day in which the Lord [Jehovah] hath delivered [delivereth] Sisera into thine hand: is [doth] not the Lord [Jehovah] gone [go] out before thee? So Barak went down from Mount Tabor, and  
15 ten thousand men after him. And the Lord [Jehovah] discomfited [confounded] Sisera, and all *his* [the] chariots, and all *his* [the] host, with the edge of the sword<sup>1</sup> before Barak; so that [and] Sisera lighted down off *his* chariot, and fled away on  
16 his feet. But [And] Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles [Harosheth Hagojim]: and all the host of Sisera fell  
17 upon [by] the edge of the sword; *and* there was not a man left. Howbeit, Sisera fled<sup>2</sup> away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite: for *there was*  
18 peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him. Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not. And when he had turned [And he turned] in unto her into the tent, [and] she  
19 covered him with a mantle.<sup>3</sup> And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty. And she opened a bottle of milk [the milk-skin], and gave  
20 him drink, and covered him. Again [And] he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and inquire of thee, and say, Is  
21 there any man here? that thou shalt say, No. Then [And] Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent [the tent-pin], and took an [the] hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote [drove] the nail [pin] into his temples, and fastened it [and it pressed through] into the ground: for he was fast asleep, and weary. So  
22 he died.<sup>4</sup> And behold, as [omit: as] Barak pursued Sisera, [and] Jael came out [went] to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will shew thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into her tent, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the  
23 nail [pin] *was* in his temples. So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of  
24 Canaan before the children [sons] of Israel. And the hand of the children [sons] of Israel prospered, and prevailed [grew continually heavier] against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 15. — לְפִי-הָרֶבֶךְ. Standing in connection with יָדָה, these words are of somewhat difficult interpretation. Dr. Cassel's rejection of them will not commend itself to most critics; nor is the provisional translation he gives of them, "in the conflict," exactly clear. The best view is probably that of Bachmann, that the expression denotes the great operative cause by which Jehovah confounded the enemy. Barak's men, rushing down from the mountain, and

falling suddenly on the hosts of Sisera, cutting down with remorseless sword all that stood in their way, threw the enemy into utter confusion; but the effect is rightly ascribed to Jehovah, from whose Spirit both the impulse and the strength to execute proceeded. — Ta.]

[2 Ver. 17. — Dr. Cassel translates by the pluperfect: "had fled," cf. below. But it seems better to retain the indefinite perfect. The narrative left Sisera for a moment, in order in ver. 16 briefly to indicate the fate of the army, but now returns to him. Cf. 1 Kgs. xx. 30, and many similar instances. — Ta.]

[3 Ver. 18. — שֹׁמֵרָה. This word means a "covering;" but exactly what sort of covering is uncertain. Dr. Cassel translates here by *Regenlich*, raincloth, perhaps to indicate its close, impervious texture. Dr. Bachmann thinks it was "probably a rather large covering or mat of thick, soft material (perhaps skin or goat's-hair), on which a person lay down and in which he at the same time wrapped himself up, — a sort of mattress and coverlet in one. Similar articles still form part of the furniture of the Bedouin's tent and the Fellah's dwelling." He derives the word from שָׁרַח =

שָׁמַר, in its usual sense to support, to lean, specifically to recline at table. Accordingly the proper meaning of the word would be "supporting;" then, concretely, that which supports or serves to recline upon. — Ta.]

[4 Ver. 21. — Dr. Cassel: "and he — for weariness he had fallen fast asleep — died." Kell: "Now he was fallen into a deep sleep, and was wearied (i. e. from weariness he had fallen fast asleep); and so he died." Similarly Bachmann.

The clause וַיִּצָּק — וַיִּהְיֶה is manifestly designed to set forth the circumstances which enabled Jael to approach Sisera unperceived; consequently, the "for" of the English version is perfectly proper, and formally not less correct than Dr. Cassel's German, which was only designed to correct Luther's version: "he however, fell asleep, swooned away, and died." Dr. Wordsworth (p. 99) considers it a mistake to suppose that Jael "smote a nail into Sisera's head while he was asleep." He would render: "and he fell down astounded, and fainted away, and died." The passage is a curiosity in interpretation. — Ta.]

#### EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Intensely vivid pictures, and of the highest historical clearness, are drawn in these simple sentences. The reader is conducted, in imagination, into the tumult of the battle, and stands horror-stricken in the tent of Jael.

Ver. 12. And they told Sisera. Jabin was in Hazor, Sisera in Harosheth Hagojim. Since the tidings from Tabor come to Sisera, he must have been near the scene of action; whilst Jabin appears to be at a distance from all the events narrated.

Vers. 13, 14. And he called together, וַיִּצָּק. וַיִּצָּק means properly, to cry; here, as in ver. 10, to assemble by crying, *κρηόττειν*: he mobilizes the troops quartered round about. Everything revolves about Sisera. He is the prominent, controlling personage; commander, probably, of the mercenaries, who on account of their mixed<sup>1</sup> character, were also perhaps called *Gojim*. The chariots, which Sisera orders to be sent to the brook Kishon, must already have been in the plain, since otherwise they could not have been transported. Their headquarters cannot have been anywhere else than at Beisán, where at the same time they commanded the best chariot and cavalry roads to the country beyond the Jordan. The plain of Jezreel to which he conducts them, is ground on which his army can properly unfold itself. He leads them to the southwest side of Tabor, where the mountain shows its greatest depression. It must have been his intention, in case Barak did not attack, to surround him on the mountain, and thus compel him to descend into the valley. But before the terrible chariot-force has well arranged itself, the Israelitish army, fired with divine enthusiasm by Deborah, and led by Barak, charges down on the flanks of the enemy, and breaks up their battle ranks. Everything is thrown into confusion — panic terrors ensue, — everything turns to flight. The great captain has lost his head; of all his

strategic plans nothing remains; only presence of mind enough is left him to seek salvation from destruction by not fleeing in his chariot, nor with the others.

Vers. 15–24. And Jehovah confounded them. Deborah had promised that God would go before them — as He went before Joshua, not visibly as an angel (as the Targum has it), but in the might of his Spirit, which He puts upon his heroes. It is by that quickening Spirit that, in their charge from the height, Barak becomes lightning, and Deborah a torch, by which the enemy is consumed.

וַיִּהְיֶה, "He confounded them," as He confounded the host of the Egyptians (Ex. xiv. 24). When confusion enters the ranks of the chariots, all is lost. They are then worse than useless. God did this, that Israel might conquer.

In the conflict. לְפִיחֶרֶב. This is the only meaning which these words can have, if they properly belong here. In that case, however, the phraseology לְפִיחֶרֶב . . . וַיִּהְיֶה is peculiar, and admits only of an artificial explanation. Bertheau's idea, that God is represented as a champion hero with his sword, is altogether inadmissible.

To me it seems likely that לְפִיחֶרֶב did not originally stand here at all, but slipped in from ver. 16, an error easily accounted for by the fact that the next word, לָפָז, begins with the same letters.

And Sisera lighted down off his chariot. Because on that he was likely to be recognized. The bulk of the army, on account of the chariots, can only flee along the plain, back to Harosheth, whence they advanced. Sisera takes to his feet, in order to escape by other roads. He foresees that Barak will pursue the army, and look for him there. Therefore he secretly flees in a northern direction towards Hazor; and gains thereby at all events the advantage that Barak seeks him in the other direction, towards Harosh-

<sup>1</sup> According to Ezekiel (ch. xxvii. 10), Paras, Lud, and Phut, were in the army of the king of Tyre, as mercenaries. The same prophet (ch. xxxviii. 5), addressing Gog, implies that he had Paras, Cush, and Phut, in his service. It is certainly more reasonable to think of the Assyrian Cush (Cossaeans) as connected with the army of Gog, than of the African. In place of Gog and Magog, an ancient interpretation already puts Cimmerians and Scythians. In like

manner, Symmachus explains the king of Elam, who invaded Palestine, to be the king of the Scythians. The historical fact that people of Scythian manners served in the armies of the Phoenicians, may serve to render the existence of a Scythian colony at Beisán more probable at least, than it is on the basis of the traditions communicated by Pliny and others, which are only like similar stories current at Antioch and elsewhere.



eth. During the tumult in which his proud army is shattered by the heroic deeds of Israel, he has succeeded in getting well on towards his destination, and thinks himself to have found a safe hiding-place with a friend. The language is designedly chosen to indicate this order of events: first, ver. 15, and Sisera fled; then, ver. 16, Barak pursued; finally, ver. 17, Sisera *had* fled. — Between Heber the Kenite and Jabin there was peace; the Kenite therefore had not shared the oppression under which Israel suffered. Consequently, Sisera could hope to find in his tent a little rest from the fatigue of his long-continued exertions. Securer still was the shelter of the woman's tent. In that of Heber, he might have feared the violence of Barak: the tent of a woman no one enters with hostile purpose. He seems first to have made inquiries. She meets him with friendly mien, invites him urgently, and quiets his apprehensions: "fear not," she says; she prepares him a couch that he may rest himself, and covers him carefully with a close covering. The covering is called שֹׁמֵרָה, a word which occurs only here. The derivations given in Bochart (*Phaleg*, 749) and in the recent lexicons (Gesenius, Fürst), throw no light on it.

שֹׁמֵרָה is the Syriac and Chaldee נִשְׁכָּה hide, skin, leather; Arabic, نَشْء (cf. Freytag, *Lex. Arab.*, iv., *sub voce*), *clitium, saccus*. This is finally indicated by those Greek versions (followed also by Augustine; and cf. Rödman, p. 83) which translate it δέπρις; for that means not only "hide," but also "leathern covering," and a female garment, according to the *Etymol. Magnum*, where we read of a γυνή μέλαινα δέπριν ἡμφιεσμένη. Thus also the direction of certain Rabbins that this word is to be interpreted as שֹׁמֵרָה (*stragula*), explains itself. The Targum also agrees with this; for it has נִשְׁכָּה, καυκάκη, a covering rough on one side. Nor is anything else meant by the word נִשְׁכָּה (in Targum of Jon., Deut. xxiv. 13). It must be a close covering, fitted to conceal the soldier who lies under it.

Sisera is not incautious. He proceeds to ask for drink, pleading thirst. She gives him of her milk. It is an ancient, oriental practice, common to all Bedouins, Arabs, and the inhabitants of deserts in general, that whoever has eaten or drunk anything in the tent, is received into the peace of the house. The Arab's mortal enemy slumbers securely in the tent of his adversary, if he have drunk with him. Hence, Saladin refuses to give drink to the bold Frank Knight, Reynald of Chatillon, because he wishes to kill him (Marin, *Hist. of Saladin*, ii. 19). Sisera thinks that he may now safely yield to sleep. Only he feels that he ought first to instruct Jael how to answer any pursuers that may come. How did he deceive

himself! Sisera is made to know the demonlike violence [*dämonische Gewalt*] of a woman's soul, which, when it breaks loose, knows no bounds. True, Jabin is at peace with Heber. But Jael's race and its history have from time immemorial intergrown with those of Israel. Israel's freedom is her freedom; Israel's glory, her glory. How many women have been dishonored and carried away as booty by Sisera (ch. v. 30)! Shall she be idle, when the tyrant gives himself up into her hands? What, if she saves him? Will it not be treason on her part against the ancient covenant with Israel? Will he not, by virtue of his vigor and skill, collect fresh troops, and threaten Israel anew? Shall it be said, Jael saved the enemy of the people among whom she lived as among brothers, to their destruction? The conflict in which she finds herself is great; and none but a great and powerful soul could end it as she does. She will not allow him to escape — as he will do, if she refuse to harbor him; and yet, she can harbor him only to destroy, — and that not without doing violence to ancient popular custom. She makes her decision. She scorns the reward which Sisera's safety might perhaps have brought her. She takes the nobler object into consideration — the freedom of a kindred nation, — and the older right preponderates. A ruthless warrior stands before her, the violator of a thousand laws of right, and all hesitation vanishes. She has no sword with which to hew the oppressor down, and seizes the terrible weapon of womanly cunning, before which no law can stand. Besides, it has been noticed, even in modern times, that in general the women of those regions care less about the rights of hospitality than the men. Burkhardt in his wanderings had personal experience of this (Ritter, xiv. 179).

Jael, through her terrible deed, far surpasses similar female characters of other times and nations. Concerning the Greek Aretophila, of Cyrene, Plutarch (*On the Virtues of Women*, n. 19) exclaims: "Her glorious deed raises her to the rank of the most ancient heroines!" What was her deed? By poison, lies, and perjury, she finally succeeded in overthrowing the tyrant who loved her, the husband who trusted her! But she would never have risen to such an undertaking, had he not slain her first husband. Still more horrible is the Chriemhild of the German *Nibelungen*. She invites those whom she wishes to murder, from a great distance; she not only violates the rights of hospitality, but her victims are her own relatives, countrymen, and friends. Jael has no by-ends, no personal wrong to avenge; the tyrant is a stranger to her, and not properly her enemy. But he is the oppressor of the freedom of the people of God, with whose life her own and that of her race have become identified. She does a demonlike deed, — but does it solely and purely in the service of general ideas.<sup>2</sup>

1 [STANLEY: "It must have been three days after the battle that he reached a spot, which seems to gather into itself, as in the last scene of an eventful drama, all the characters of the previous acts." — Tr.]

2 [Dr. Wordsworth, treating the question, "What is the true character of Jael's act?" argues that as it was commended by the Song of Deborah, and as that Song "is re-echoed by the Holy Ghost as the utterance of one who spoke by his own inspiration," it follows that "Jael must have received a special commission from God to attempt and perform this act." Much in the history, he says, "confirms this conclusion." What he adduces, however, is not worth repeating. Dr. Bachmann enters into the discussion very

fully. The salient points of his essay may, however, be stated in few words. He thinks it unquestionable that the language of Deborah, ch. iv. 9, "Jehovah shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman," is a prediction of the chieftain's destruction by Jael. This utterance of the prophetic cannot have been unknown to Jael. Hence, when the latter sees Sisera approach her tent for shelter, she at once obtains the clear and certain conviction that it is by her hands that he is to fall. She therefore acts under a divine commission. Her invitation to Sisera, her promise of protection, and her honorable entertainment of him, are not to be defended. But "although she transcended the proper limits in the means she employed, it is not to be denied that the operation of

It had not been necessary for her to kill him. Scarcely was her deed accomplished, before Barak, swift as lightning both in battle and in pursuit, appeared. But, since it was done, it served to manifest the faithfulness of the Kenite, and to increase the disgrace of Jabin. Barak had gained nothing by personally slaying the flying foe; only the honor of the hostile chieftain had been subserved, if he had fallen by the sword of the hero. Filled with astonishment, Barak enters the tent of Jael — a noble subject for the painter's pencil!<sup>1</sup> — and before him lies the mighty Sisera, a dead man, nailed to the earth by a woman! A victory thus begun, could not but end magnificently. Continually more telling were the blows that fell on Jabin's head, until his power was annihilated. No other Jabin reigned in Hazor. His name is thrice repeated in verses 23 and 24, in order to emphasize its importance.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Deborah, the female Judge, full of fire, and Barak the hero. Israel's sin remains ever the same. When their hero dies, when the elders who have seen the works of God are no more, the younger generation apostatizes. So perverse and cowardly is the human heart; and times do not change, nor experience teach it. — STARKE: Peace and too prosperous days are not long good for men.

But the danger of the judgment becomes ever greater, the tyranny of sin ever stronger and nearer. The king of Aram, whom Othniel smote, was distant; the king of Moab, beyond the Jordan; but the king of Hazor is in the midst of the land, possessed of unprecedented power. However, the greater the power of the enemy, the more manifest become the wonders of God's compassion. The deliverer raised up against Moab, though left-handed, is a man; but against the master of nine hundred iron chariots, the battle is waged through a woman. Thus, 1. the heathen learn that victory comes not by horses or horsemen, but by the word of God; and, 2. Israel is humbled, not only by the judgment, but also by the mercy, of God.

There was no want of warlike men in Israel; but lances break like rushes, when the heart is not courageous. Israel, with all its strong men, is impotent so long as it lacks faith in its God. Barak

is a valiant hero, but a woman must call him. His name is "Lightning," and his deeds are mighty; but the lightning is kindled by the fire-words of the prophetess. As Moses sings after the exodus, "The Lord is a man of war, the Lord is his name," so Deborah's word and song testify that God alone can save. To make this truth seen and believed by all, He lends his victory to a woman. Thus the vanity of men reveals itself, who ascribe to themselves that which belongs to God. Military readiness is of no avail, when readiness of spirit is not cherished. Not legions, but prophets, guard the kingdom of God. God only can conquer, and He suffers not men to prescribe the instruments of conquest.

Barak was a valiant hero, for he was obedient. He followed, but did not begin. Hence, also, though he gained the victory in the field, he nevertheless did not complete it. He took his impulse from a woman, — with Deborah, but not without her, he was willing to go where he went; a woman likewise finished the victory, when Jael slew the leader of the enemy. He waited for the spirit which Deborah breathed into him; not so did Jael wait for his sword to lay Sisera low. Hence, a woman's name became connected both with the beginning and the end of the great achievement. Thus God grants results according to the measure of courage. As we believe, so we have. If Barak had believed like Deborah, he would have been as near to God as she was. But the Spirit of God needs no soldiers to conquer. He glorifies, through his word, the despised things of the world. Jesus selected as disciples, not athletes, but children of God who sought their Father. Put up thy sword, He said to Peter. When risen from the dead, it was to a woman that He first appeared.

STARKE: Holy men love holy company, for therein they find a great blessing. — THE SAME: We with our distrust often close God's hands, so that but for our own actions, He would give us far more than He does; for God is more inclined to give, than we to receive. — THE SAME: So are men's hearts in the hands of God, that out of the timid He can make heroes, and out of heroes, cowards. — GERLACH: The holy faith that animates the deed of Jael, is of divine origin; the ways and methods, however, of rude and savage times continue in part until the time when all the promises of God in Christ shall be fulfilled.

the Spirit of God influenced her deed, nor that she acted from the impulse of the obedience of faith. It is, moreover, only from this point of view that we obtain an explanation of the fact that Deborah in her judgment (ch. v. 24 ff.) so entirely overlooked the human weakness that clung to Jael's

deed." Compare the remarks of Dean Stanley, *Hist. of the Jewish Church*, i. 365-370. — Tr.]

<sup>1</sup> It is powerfully treated in the *Bibel in Bildern*, published by Schnorr.

*Deborah's Song of Triumph.*

## CHAPTER V. 1-31.

## THE SUPERScription.

## Verse 1.

## 1 Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying,

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

The special sign of the prophetic spirit, is the use of lyrical expression. The praise of God, and the proclamation of his mighty deeds, burst from the prophets in the rapture of poetic visions. Their language is glowing and powerful, like a torch in the night. This lofty view of the nature of poetry shows itself everywhere. Poets, says Socrates, speak like men divinely inspired, like those who deliver oracles. Among the Romans, legendary tradition (Liv. i. 7) told of an ancient prophetic nymph, Carmenta (from *Carmen*). Of no Judge is it expressly said that he was a prophet: this is affirmed of Deborah alone; and she alone among them sang, — and that, not merely as Miriam, who with her women formed the responsive choir to Moses' song, but as Moses, the victor, himself.

She sang, שָׁרָה. She was the creator of the song. Quite parallel is the expression, Ex. xv. 1: "then sang Moses and the sons of Israel" (שָׁרָה), not "they sang." Moses, divinely inspired, composed the song, and the people sang it. The case was similar with Deborah. The feminine of the verb, with the following connective, וְ, expresses the independent creation and the joint-execution of the Song; for already in the fourth chapter, Barak stands for the most part for the people themselves. Thus, Barak has gone up to Mount Tabor, ch. iv. 12; Sisera's army is thrown into confusion before Barak, ver. 15; Barak pursues, ver. 16; etc. Here also, therefore, Barak takes the place which in the Song of Moses the "children of Israel" occupy. He and his men raise Deborah's hymn as their song of triumph; and thus it becomes a national hymn. Song is the noblest ornament which the nations of antiquity can devise for victory. They preserve its utterances tenaciously, both as evidences of their prowess, and as incentives to action in times of dishonor. In the days of Pausanias (in the second century after Christ), and therefore about 800 years after the event, the Messenians still sang a triumphal song of the time of Aristomenes (Paus. iv. 16). Perhaps the most interesting remnant of German recollections of Arminius, is the Westphalian popular song, still sung in the region of what was once the field of

victory (cf. Horkel, in *Der Gesch. der Deutschen Vorzeit*, i. 257). In the case of Israel, whose victories are the steps in its national work, and the evidences of its religious truth, the interest of such a song is the greater, because there tradition moulded the conscience of the generations, and fidelity to its earliest history formed the conditions of the national calling, greatness, and glory.

The form of the Song, as of the old Hebrew poetry generally, is that of free rhythm. The Song is a poetical stream: everywhere poetical, and yet untrammelled by any artistic division into strophes. Such a division, it is true, is not altogether wanting; but it is never made a rule. Consequently, efforts to force it systematically on the poem, while only traces of it show themselves, are all in vain. There is no want of finish; introduction and conclusion are well defined; but the pauses subordinate themselves to the thoughts, and these unfold themselves free as the waves. The peculiar character of the Song consists in the boldness of its imagery and the force of its unusual language. It appropriates, in a natural manner, all those forms which genuine poetry does not seek but produce; but it appropriates them all with a freedom which endures none as a rule, yet without, like the natural stream, violating harmony. The Song, then, has strophes, but they are not of equal measure; it moves along in parallelisms, but with variations corresponding to the movement of the thought. The most interesting feature to be noticed, is the alliteration, which appears in the highest development and delicacy, as elsewhere only in the old Norse poems, but also with considerable freedom from restraint. It is important to notice this, because it testifies, more than any division into strophes that may exist, to the nature of the popular song and its lyrical use. The divisions which the poem certainly shows, are determined only by its own course of thought. They are: the praise of God, as introduction (vers. 2-5); the delineation of the emergency (vers. 6-8); the call to praise that the evil no longer exists (vers. 9-11); delineation of the victory and the victors (vers. 12-23); the fate of the enemy (vers. 24-31). The renderings which distinguish the following translation from the older versions extant, will be justified under the several verses in which they occur.<sup>1</sup>

1 [The author's version of the Song forms an essential part of his exposition, and we therefore substitute a translation of it, adhering as closely as practicable to his German, for the ordinary English text. For Dr. Cassel's rendering of

שָׁרָה, cf. "Textual and Grammatical," note 1, p. 23. In general, it will be seen that he does not anxiously aim at literalness. The black-faced letters are designed to imitate, rather than reproduce, the alliteration which in our author's view forms a marked feature of the poem (see above). It

may be useful to some readers to be referred to the following readily accessible English versions of the Song: Robinson's, with an extended commentary, in *Bibl. Repository*, 1831, p. 568; "Review of Hollmann on the Song of Deborah," *Ciris. Spectator* (New Haven), ii. 307; Robbins, "The Song of Deborah," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1855, p. 597; Milman's version, in *Hist. of the Jews*, i. 292; Stanley's, in *Jewish Church*, i. 370. The whole special literature of the subject is given by Bachmann, i. 298 ff. — Tr.]

## INTRODUCTION.

Vers. 2-5.

- 2 That in Israel wildly waved the hair  
In the people's self-devotion, — Praise God!  
3 Hear, O ye kings, give ear, O ye princes:  
I for God,<sup>1</sup> unto Him will I sing,  
I will strike the strings unto God, the Lord of Israel!  
4 O God, at thy march from Seir,  
At thy going forth from Edom's fields,  
The earth trembled, and the heavens dropped,  
Yea, the clouds dropped down water.  
5 The mountains were dismayed before God,  
Even this<sup>2</sup> Sinai, before God, the Lord of Israel.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 3. — Dr. Cassel: *Ich für Gott*; but the accents separate אֱלֹהִים from לַיהוָה, and there appears no good reason for disregarding them. The position and repetition of the subject אֱלֹהִים serve to bring the person of the Singer prominently into view, and that not in her character as woman, but as prophetic, filled with the Spirit of God, and therefore entitled to challenge the attention of kings and princes. So Bachmann. — Tr.]

[2 Ver. 5. — אֵת סִינַי: literally, "this Sinai." "Sinai is present to the poetic eye of Deborah" (Wordsworth). Dr. Cassel translates by the definite article, *der Sinai*. — Tr.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 2. The above translation of ver. 2<sup>1</sup> differs from all earlier renderings, which however also differ more or less from each other. The most interesting among them is that of those Greek versions which render "ἐν τῇ ἀρξασθαι ἀρχαγγέλου." It has been followed by a multitude of esteemed expositors (Schnurrer, Rosenmüller, Ewald, Bertheau, Böttger, Kemink); and yet it betrays its Egyptian origin, since in connection with פְּרָעוֹת Egyptian origin, since in connection with פְּרָעוֹת it thought only of the Egyptian Pharaoh or king, and expounded accordingly. A similar, more homiletical interpretation proceeds from the Targum. This was more naturally reminded of פְּרָעוֹת, ultio, vindicta; the Midrash, by speaking of the cessation of the sufferings, whose previous existence is implied in the necessity for vengeance, shows that it adopts the same interpretation. Teller also, perhaps unconsciously, arrived at the same explanation. The interpretation of Raschi, who takes פָּרַע as equivalent to פָּרַץ, and of those who suppose it equivalent to פָּרַט, may, like various others, be passed over in silence. The natural exposition, which is always at the same time the poetical, has on all sides been overlooked. פָּרַע is undoubtedly (as in Arabic) the hair of the head, and more particularly the long, waving hair, the coma,<sup>2</sup> as appears from Ezek. xlv. 20. פְּרָעוֹת is its plural form, and is used in Deut.

בְּפָרַע פְּרָעוֹת בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל  
בְּהִתְנַבֵּחַ עִם בָּרְכוֹ יְהוָה

<sup>2</sup> That we must go back to the sense of this word, is also admitted by Kell; but he attaches a meaning to it which it never has. [KELL: פְּרָעוֹת here means properly

xxxii. 42, where blood is spoken of as flowing down from the hairy head (מִרְאֵשׁ פְּרָעוֹת אֵימָה).

Hence the verb פָּרַע, (cf. κομᾶν, to cultivate the hair), signifies "to make loose," to allow to "become wild," as when the hair flies wild and loose about the neck; wherefore it is said of Aaron (Ex. xxxii. 25) that he had caused the people to grow wild, פָּרַעָה, "to grow wild," and of the people that they "had grown wild" (פָּרַעָה). The circumstances under which the hair was allowed to grow, are well known. The person who makes a vow, who would be holy unto God, is directed (Num. vi. 5) to let his hair grow (פָּרַעָה). The instance of Samson, to which we shall come hereafter, is familiar. The present occasion for this observance arose בְּהִתְנַבֵּחַ עִם, when the people consecrated themselves, devoted themselves (se devoti), to God, — the people, namely, who gave heed to the voice of Deborah, and placed themselves in the position of one who called himself holy unto God. Israel, through disobedience, had fallen into servitude. Those who followed Barak, had faith in God; upon the strength of this faith they hazarded their lives. They devoted themselves wholly as a sacrifice to God. The verse therefore exhibits a profound apprehension of the essential nature of the national life. It sets forth the ground of the very possibility of the Song, and therefore stands at its head. Israel could be victorious only by repentance and return to obedience.<sup>4</sup> The prophetess delineates, poetically and with forcible beauty, comati, hairy persons, i. e. those who are endowed with strength. The champions in battle are meant, who by their prowess and valor preceded the people." — Tr.]

<sup>8</sup> The verb נָדַב occurs only in Exodus, Ezra, Chronicles, and here.

<sup>4</sup> The Targum, though merely paraphrastic, in its spirit agrees entirely with this interpretation.

the people's great act of self-devotion, when whole tribes give themselves to God, — their hair streaming, their hearts rejoicing, — and place their strength and trust in Him. They were the *καρποκώδυντες*<sup>1</sup> of a divine freedom. This interpretation also brings the parallelism out clearly: *בְּקָרֶץ* stands in both causal and appositional correlation with *בְּרִיחַ*. The preposition *בְּ* points out the condition of the people in which they conquered and sang. The Song is the people's consecration hymn, and praises God for the prosperous and successful issue with which He has crowned their vows. "Praise ye God," it exclaims, "for the long locks," — i. e. *for and in* the people's consecration. The result of every such consecration as God blesses, is his praise. And now, the nations must hear it! The object of Israel's national pride, is its God. Hence, Israel's song of triumph is a call upon surrounding kings to hear what God did for his people when they gave themselves up to Him.<sup>2</sup>

Ver. 3. Hear, O ye kings and princes. Both are expressions for the "mighty ones" among the nations, cf. Ps. ii. 2. *רִיבִיּוֹת* are the great, the strong. *Rosen* manifestly answers to the Sanskrit *vrishṇa* (Benfey, i. 332), Old High German *rīso*, giant. — Deborah proposes not merely to sing, but adds, I will play (*תִּנְחֵל*). As in the Psalms, singing and playing are joined together, one representing thought, the other sound. The action expressed by *תִּנְחֵל*, is performed on various instruments (cf. Ps. cxliv. 9, "ten-stringed lute"), chiefly on the cithern, a species of harp or lyre (Ps. xcvi. 5, etc.), but also with timbrels and citherns (Ps. cxlix. 3, cf. Ps. lxxxi. 3). Miriam also accompanied her antiphonal song with timbrels (*tympānis*, Ex. xv. 20), Jephthah's daughter used them as she came to meet her father (Judg. xi. 34). Nor can they have failed as an accompaniment to the Song of our prophetess. *Tympāna* (*toph*, timbrels) appear in antiquity as the special instrument of impassioned women (Creuzer, *Symbolik*, iii. 489).

The derivation of the word *תִּנְחֵל* is not clear. Delitzsch is doubtless right in deciding (*Psalter*, i. 19) that it has nothing to do with the *samar* which signifies to "prune the vine." That *samar* reminds one of the Greek *σμίλη*, a clasp and earving-knife. *Simmer*, to play (scil. *mīsmor*, ψαλμός), distinguishes itself as an onomatopoeic word. The primitive Greek singer, whose contest with the muses in cithern-playing Homer already relates, was named *Thamyris* (*Il.* ii. 594).

Ver. 4, 5. O God at thy march from Seir. An Israelitish song can praise God only by re-

hearsing the history of Israel. For the fact that God is in its history constitutes the sole foundation of Israel's national existence and rights over against other nations. But this immanence of God in the history of the people, manifests itself most wonderfully in those events through which, as by steps, Israel became a nation. For not in Egypt, where Israel was a servant, was the nation born, nor through the exodus alone; the nationality of Israel is the child of the desert. There, through the self-revelation of God, Israel became a free people. The journey through the desert — of which Sinai was the central point, — by the giving of the law and the impartation of doctrine, by the wonderful provision of food and the gift of victory, and by the infliction of awful judgments, became one continuous act of divine revelation. Thus, Israel came forth from the desert a perfected nation. The prophetic insight of the Hebrew poets, at one clear glance, traces the desert-birth of the nation back to the manifest nearness of God as its cause. All that happened to the people came from God. "The Lord came from Sinai," says the Song of Moses (Deut. xxxiii. 2), "and rose up from Seir; He shined forth from Mount Paran." The 114th psalm (ver. 2) represents the exodus from Egypt as the beginning of Israel's nationality: "Then Judah became his sanctuary." Deborah takes Seir and Edom, whence Israel entered history as a nation, as representatives of the whole desert; which from her position was, even geographically, quite natural. The 68th Psalm, borrowing from this passage, at the same time explains it by substituting more general terms for Seir and Edom: "When thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness." The wilderness was the theatre of the revelation of God. There He appeared to his people. Where is there another nation to whom this occurred? "Hear, ye kings," cries the prophetess, what nation was ever raised up, instructed, and led, by the manifest presence of such a God?

The earth trembled. The superior grandeur of Scriptural over the noblest Hellenic conceptions, is scarcely anywhere more clearly apparent. The earthquake, with Hesiod and others, is symbolic of conflict between the powers above and those below, between Zeus and Typhon: —

"Great Olympus trembled beneath the immortal feet  
Of the Ruler rising up, and hollow groaned the earth."

The earth resounded, and the heavens around, and the  
floods of ocean."<sup>4</sup>

To the prophetic spirit of Deborah, also, and of the Psalms, the earthquake becomes a powerful symbol; but it is the symbol of the creature's

would be doubted whether the expression taken in this sense would ever have been intelligible, notwithstanding the alleged explanatory apposition of the second member of the verse; at all events, in the language of the law *פָּרַע* denotes, not an act, but a condition (the consequence of the fulfilment of a vow of consecration — and to a beginning the reference would have to be here, — could have no existence." — Tr.)

3 For *מִשְׁעֵר*, Ps. lxviii. substitutes *מִשְׁעֵר*, and for *מִשְׁעֵר* it has *מִשְׁעֵר*.

4 Hesiod, *Theogon.*, v. 840, etc.

1 ["Long-haired," cf. the Homeric *καρποκώδυντες* Ἀχαιοὺς, "long-haired Greeks," *Il.* ii. 11, etc. Among the later Greeks, long hair was the badge of freedom, and hence was not allowed to slaves. See Smith's *Dict. Antiquities*, s. v. "Coma." — Tr.]

2 (Dr. Bachmann adopts the view of ver. 2 given by the LXX. according to the Alexandrine Codex: *ἐν τῇ ἀρχαίᾳ ἀρχηγῶς ἐν Ἰσραὴλ*, and translates, "that the leaders led," etc. The idea of "leading" or "going before," he says,

may be readily derived from the radical meaning of *פָּרַע*, to break forth," sc. into prominence (*hervorbrechen*). His criticism on our author's translation is as follows: "To say nothing of the fact that the participle (?) *פָּרַע* excites

surprise, standing as it does in parallelism with *עָלָה*, it may

humility and awe on account of the sacred nearness of God. For Israel's sake, God descended from on high; the creature knows its Lord, and trembles. The earth trembles,<sup>1</sup> and "the heavens pour." (In the desert peninsula of Sinai the latter is a wonder. Even at this day, the Bedouins cherish the superstition that Moses had in his possession the book which determines the fall of rain.) The heavens lose their brazen aridity; whatever is hard and unyielding, firm as rock and stone, becomes soft and liquid:<sup>2</sup> the mountains stagger, the rocks flow down like water (זָלַג). The earthquake-belt that girdles the Mediterranean afforded numerous instances of such phenomena. Tremendous masses of rock have been shaken down from Mount Sinai by earthquakes (Ritter xiv. 601, etc.). Even this Sinai. That is, Sinai especially, Sinai before all others is the mountain that shook when God descended, according to the statement, Ex. xix. 18; "and the whole mount quaked greatly." Thunders rolled and heavy clouds hung upon its summit (Ex. xix. 16). "The mountains saw thee," says Habakkuk (ch. iii. 10), "and they trembled; the overflowing of the waters passed by." "What ailed you, ye mountains, that ye trembled like

1 Cf. Jer. x. 10; Joel iv. (iii.) 16, etc.

lambs?" asks the Psalmist, Ps. cxiv. 6: "Before the Lord the earth trembled, before the God of Jacob."

These introductory ascriptions of praise to God, have no reference to the battle at the Kishon. They magnify the power and majesty of Israel's God, as manifested in the nation's earlier history. Such is the God of Israel, the nations are told. Such is He who has chosen Israel for his people. It was there in the desert that they became his; and for that reason the poet selects the scenes of the desert as the material of her praise. She speaks with great brevity: the 68th Psalm amplifies her conceptions. Very unfortunate is the conjecture (Böttger) that by Sinai Tabor is meant. It is altogether at variance with the spirit of the old covenant, which could never consent to make Sinai the representative of any less sacred mountain. Moreover, the battle was not on Tabor, but in the plain, near the Kishon. With ver. 5 closes that part of the Song by which the "kings and princes" are informed that the God whom the elements fear, has become the Lord of Israel. With ver. 6 the poetess first enters on the history of the state of affairs which existed in Israel previous to her great deed.

2 "The mountains melt like wax," cf. Ps. cxvii. 5.

#### THE PREVIOUS DISTRESS.

Vers. 6-8.

- 6 After<sup>1</sup> the days of Shamgar, son of Anath,  
After the Helper's (Jael's) days,  
The highways were deserted,  
The traveller went in winding ways.
- 7 Deserted were Israel's hamlets,<sup>2</sup> deserted,  
Till I Deborah rose up — rose up a mother in Israel.
- 8 New gods had they got them<sup>3</sup> — therefore the press of war approached their  
gates; <sup>4</sup>  
Among forty thousand in Israel was there found<sup>5</sup> or shield or spear?

#### TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 6.—On this translation of  $\text{בְּ}$ , compare the author's remarks below. The justification they attempt, is, however too forced and artificial to be satisfactory. The passages cited in its support, are rather against it. For in Num. xiv. 11, it is the very fact that Israel's unbelief exists contemporaneously, in the presence, as it were, of mighty wonders, that makes it so culpable. And so in the passages cited from Isaiah (ch. v. 25; ix. 11 (12); x. 4), it is the continuance of Jehovah's anger while surrounded, so to speak, by the terrible evidences of previous punitive inflictions, that gives it its full dreadfulness. It seems necessary, therefore, to take  $\text{בְּ}$  here in the sense of "in," "during." It is necessary, further, to place Shamgar not in, but after, the eighty years' rest procured by Ehud, cf. on ch. iii. 31; for while the "land rested," such a state of affairs as Deborah here describes cannot have existed. He belongs to the period of the Canaanite oppression in the north, and fought against the Philistines who rose up in the south (so Bachmann and others). A single exploit is told of him; and the comparatively inferior position assigned him in the Book of Judges, seems to warrant the conclusion that it was the only remarkable deed he did. That deed, however, was one which would make him universally known and held up as a great hero. Deborah seizes on this popular estimate of Shamgar, in order by contrast to heighten the glory of the divine deliverance just achieved. Such was your condition when your great hero lived, she says: but now, behold, what hath God wrought! — The words  $\text{בְּיָמֵי יַעֲלֵי}$ , "in the days of Jael," contain another difficulty. It must strike every one as inappropriate that one who, so far as we know, had only now become famous, and that by a deed of deliverance, namely, Jael, the slayer of Sisera, should be connected with the past misery. Dr. Cassel's suggestion that  $\text{יַעֲלֵי}$  is to be taken as a surname or popular designation of some hero (see below), becomes therefore exceedingly attractive. But according to our view of  $\text{בְּ}$ , the hero thus designated cannot be Ehud, but must be Shamgar — **Th**.

[2 Ver. 7 —  $\text{בְּיָמֵי}$ . Gesenius and Fürst define this word as properly meaning, "rule, dominion;" here, concrete for

"rulers, leaders." So also Bertheau, De Wette, Bunsen, and similarly many previous expositors in all versions: LXX., Cod. Vat. *δυνατοί*, al. *εὐκτοδ. οὐ ἀπαρτῶντες* (Cod. Al. simply transfers the word, and writes *φράζων*); It. Ver. *potentes*, Vulg. *fortes*. This undoubtedly yields a good sense; but, as Bachmann points out, it rests on a meaning of the root פָּרַז, which although belonging to it in Arabic, it does not practically have in Hebrew. Moreover, it appears to be a hazardous proceeding to separate פָּרַז from פָּרָה in signification, if not (as Fürst does) in root-relations. Accordingly, Bachmann and Keil, like our author and others, explain פָּרַז by פָּרָה, and make it mean the "open country," or "the unwall'd cities or villages of the open country." In this they only follow the Targum, Peshito, most of the Rabbins, and many earlier and later expositors. The form of the word shows that it is properly an abstract, cf. Ges. *Gr.* 83, 2; 84, 15; Ewald, 163, b, d. Keil and Cassel make it apply in the concrete to the cities, villages, or hamlets, Bachmann to the population, of the open country (*Landvolk*). The connection of the passage, he thinks, requires a personal, not local, signification; for as ver. 8 a corresponds to (or rather gives the ground of) ver. 6 c d, so ver. 7 a (the cessation of פָּרַז) must correspond to ver. 8 b (the absence of shield and spear). He further argues that as in ver. 2, 7 b, and 8 b, בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל refers to the *people* of Israel, it must also refer to them in ver. 7 a; and, finally, that the signification "rural population," is more suitable in ver. 11. The ultimate result is the same whether one or the other interpretation be adopted; yet, as Bachmann's arguments do not appear to have much force, and as the immediately preceding mention of highways leads the mind to think of local centres of population rather than of the population itself, we prefer to interpret villages or hamlets. — Tr.]

[3 Ver. 8. — Dr. Cassel's translation conforms more closely to the original: *Gewählt hatten sie neue Götter*, — "they had chosen new gods." The above English rendering was adopted in order to reproduce the alliteration of the German. — Tr.]

[4 Ver. 8. — אֵין לָתֵם שְׁנֵיָרִים: literally, "then war (was at the) gates." לָתֵם is best explained as a verbal noun from *piel*, the vowel of the final syllable of the absolute לָתֵם being shortened because of the close connection with the following word, and the retraction of the tone being omitted on account of the toneless initial syllable of שְׁנֵיָרִים (Bertheau, Keil, Bachmann). שְׁנֵיָרִים may be genitive (in which case לָתֵם must be in the construct state) or accusative of place, which is more simple. — Tr.]

[5 Ver. 8. — אֵין-יִרְאָה. According to Keil and others אֵין introduces a negative interrogatory. But as אֵין with simple, direct questions is rare, cf. Ges. *Gr.* 153, 2, Bachmann prefers to regard it as the אֵין of obtestation: "if shield or spear were seen!" i. e. they were not seen. So also Bertheau, Gesenius, Fürst (in their Lexicons), and many others. — Tr.]

#### EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Vers. 6-8. After the days of Shamgar, בְּיָמֵי שַׁמְגָר. The difficulty of the passage can scarcely be removed, if, as is usually done, the preposition בְּ be taken in the sense of "in," "during." During the days of Shamgar such misery cannot have come upon Israel. The narrator could not in that case have said of him, ch. iii. 31, that he "delivered Israel," just as (ver. 15) he speaks of Ehud as a "deliverer." If Shamgar was no deliverer, how can it be said "and after him (or like him, i. e. Ehud, cf. on ch. iii. 31) was Shamgar?" It seems impossible to assume (as nevertheless Keil also does), that the poetess could say of the days of such a hero, that there was no resistance and defense, no sword or shield, in Israel. The disparaging connection in which, were this assumption true, it would please her to exhibit the hero, is also wholly at variance with her spirit. To this must be added that, as was above shown to be probable, Shamgar's famous exploit and further activity fall within the eighty years of "rest" after Ehud. At all events, Shamgar's fame is related before the time in which Israel again begins to sin, and consequently again falls into servitude. It cannot therefore be otherwise understood, than that Deborah retraces the misery of her people up to the time of this last hero. "Since the days of Shamgar," i. e. upon and after his days, the highways began to be deserted.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The use of בְּ in, in the sense of upon = after, cannot be considered surprising, when the poetical freedom of the language is taken into account. Even our German *auf* "upon" or "on", of which Grimm says that in many cases it has appropriated the meaning of *in*, affords an instance of the same kind. To pass by other examples, we also say with equal propriety, "in *vielen Tagen*" (in many

Philologically, this form of expression is not without analogies. God says (Num. xiv. 11), "They believe not me, בְּכָל הָאֲתֹרוֹת," in, i. e. after "all the wonders I have done among them." In the same manner we are to interpret בְּכָל in several passages of Isaiah (ch. ix. 11 (12); v. 25; x. 4): "the Syrians and Philistines devour Israel, — in all that, after all that, notwithstanding all that, his anger is not turned away." Thus the sense of our passage also becomes clear. Notwithstanding that the days of Shamgar have been, i. e. after them, misery began. His heroic deed against the Philistines, was the last great act performed by Israel. But the author adds, "in, after, the days of Jael." That this cannot be the stout-hearted woman who slew Sisera, is self-evident, since Deborah, speaking of her contemporary, could not say "in the days of Jael." But apart from this, the Song itself (ver. 24) distinguishes this Jael by carefully designating her as the "wife of Heber, the Kenite." Moreover, Jael is properly a man's name. The other assumption, however, that Jael was a Judge, who lived before Deborah's time, rests on slender foundations. It is utterly inconceivable that the narrator, who communicates the Song of Deborah, had he so understood it, would not have told us something of this Judge Jael. He would at all events have inserted his name, at least in some such manner as that of Shamgar himself, of Elon the Zebulonite, and of Abdon (Judg. xii. 11-15), of

days), and "nach *vielen Tagen*" (after many days), not only when the reference is to the future, but even when it is to the past. — Although Shamgar slew the Philistines with an ox-goad, that fact cannot explain the non-employment of sword and lance in ver. 3 of the Song; for, as Barak's heroes show (ch. iv. 16), there is no want of weapons, but of courage to use them.

whom nothing is reported beyond the general fact that they judged Israel. The only remaining supposition, and one fully accordant with the poetic cast of the Song, is, that Jael was the knightly surname of Shamgar, or even more probably of Ehud. We know that Gideon is frequently mentioned by his heroic name Jerubbaal, and that Samson is simply styled Bedan (1 Sam. xii. 11). That Jael might readily become the beautiful popular designation of a man so determined and rapid in his movements as Ehud, is evident, whether we take it to mean the Mountain-climber, the August One, the Prince, or the Rock-goat, whose facile ascent to the most inaccessible rocky heights is astonishing. Most probably, however, the name is connected with the word **רוֹעִיל**, to help. The same word, which is often used negatively concerning heathen gods (**לֹא יֹעִילוּ**, "they help not," 1 Sam. xii. 21, Jer. ii. 8, etc.), is here employed positively to denote one who was a "Helper" of Israel in distress. The sense, moreover, becomes thus perfectly clear: "After the days of Shamgar, after the days of Jael (Ehud)," the people perished through their sins; that is, as ch. iv. 1 asserts, and ver. 8 of this chapter confirms, — "they had chosen themselves new gods."

The highways were deserted, **חֲדָלוּ אֶרְחוֹת**: literally, they ceased to be highways. No one travelled on the public roads, because there was no security. The enemy plundered all through the country. He who was obliged to travel, sought out concealed by-paths, in order to elude the tyrant and his bands. These few lines give a striking picture of a land languishing under hostile oppression. **חֲדָלוּ פְּרוּזוֹן**, open places, hamlets, ceased to exist. **פְּרוּזוֹן** is the open country, in distinction from cities surrounded by walls and gates. One imagines himself to be reading a description of the condition of Germany in the 10th century, when the Magyars invaded the land (cf. Widukind, *Sächs. Gesch.* i. 32). Henry I. is celebrated as a builder of cities, especially because by fortifying open villages he rendered them more secure than formerly against the enemy. All ancient expositors, Greek as well as Chaldee and later Rabbinic, consent to this explanation or **פְּרוּזוֹן** (cf. Schnurrer, p. 46). Ver. 8 also agrees with it: no place without walls was any longer secure against the hostile weapons of those who oppressed Israel; the conflict was pushed even to the very gates of the mountain fortresses. The attempt to make the word mean "princes," "leaders," labors under great difficulties; which modern expositors, almost

all of whom have adopted it, have by no means overcome. It raises an internal contradiction to connect **חֲדָלוּ** with **פְּרוּזוֹן**, when taken in this sense. We can very properly say **רֹעִיבִים חֲדָלוּ**, "the hungry cease to be such," but not "princes." Of a banished dynasty there is no question. A Judge there was not; none therefore could cease to be. The lack of military virtue is first mentioned in ver. 8. Situated as Israel was, the misery of the people might be measured by the extent to which their fields and rural districts were devastated and rendered insecure. As to their "princes," their hereditary chiefs, they in fact still existed. Nor does the form of the word need any correction (cf. ver. 11).

Till I arose (**עַד אֲשֶׁר הָמַתִּי עַד שֶׁמָּתִיתִי**) a mother in Israel: who, as it were, bore Israel anew. It was the regeneration of Israel's nationality that was secured at the Kishon. How came it about (she adds, ver. 8), that Israel had so fallen as to need a new mother? They had chosen "new gods" for themselves. The eternal God, before whom the mountains trembled, Him they had forsaken. Hence the loss of all their strength. They were hard pressed, up to the very gates of their fortresses. (**לָרֶם** is not simply war, but an already victorious and consuming oppression.) Resistance in the open field there was none anywhere. Among forty thousand not one sought safety by means of sword and shield.<sup>4</sup> The poet says "new gods," not "other gods." The objective idea is of course the same, but not the subjective thought as here entertained. For Israel had from of old its everlasting God, — Ilim whose glory the poem had delineated at the outset. But instead of that God, Israel chose them *new* gods, whom they had not formerly known. There is a profoundly significant connection of thought between this passage and the Song of Moses, Deut. xxxii. 17. There the thought, which is here implied, lies fully open: "They shall sacrifice to gods whom they never knew, to *new* gods, that came newly up, whom their fathers feared not." The heathen gods of Canaan are in truth all new to Israel; for their own God had already chosen them in the desert, before ever they set foot in the land. Israel's recent ruin was the consequence of their serving these new gods. That all manliness had vanished, that servitude prevailed up to the gates of their fortresses, that they were shut out from highway, hamlet, and fountain, was the bitter fruit of their unfaithfulness to their ancient God. Nor was deliverance possible, until, as the result of Deborah's efforts, the people became regenerated by means of the ancient truth.

chosen new things." But ver. 8 itself opposes this construction, to say nothing of the contradiction which it involves with the whole course of thought. To adopt Kemink's correction, **רֹעִיבִים**, "God chose women," would only increase the distortion of the hymn, which even without this would arise from the change of subject. That not *Elohim* but *Jehovah*, would be used, were God the subject, is remarked by Bertheau (p. 88), who in his turn, however, unfortunately gives a wrong sense to *Elohim*.

1 Kell also has adopted it.

2 [Wordsworth: "Until that I Deborah arose. Deborah, as an inspired person, looks at herself from an external point of view, and speaks of herself objectively, considering all her acts as due, not to herself, but to the Spirit of God. She does not praise herself, but blesses God who acted in her: so did Moses (see Num. xii. 3), and so Samuel (1 Sam. xii. 11). — Tr.]

3 Isolated interpretations of the Middle Ages, taken up by a few moderns, find the subject in *Elohim*, as if "God had



## THE SUMMONS TO PRAISE GOD FOR DELIVERANCE.

Vers. 9-11.

- 9 My heart (was) with the Orderers of Israel,  
Who devoted themselves among the people, — Praise God!  
10 Ye who ride on beautifully-saddled asses,  
Who sit on mats,  
And walk through ways, — Sing!  
11 Instead of the cry of the contending at the cisterns,  
They praise there the benefaction of God,  
The benefaction of his freedom in Israel, —  
When the People of God hastened down to the gates.

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 9. Deborah has delineated, first, the glorious majesty of God; then, in contrast therewith, the ruin which overtook Israel because it forsook Him, and chose new gods who cannot help, till she arose, a mother in Israel. With that she returns to the beginning. For what had she done? She had called on the people to turn back, and consecrate themselves to God. When everything lay prostrate, Barak and his faithful followers had taken the vows of God upon themselves. If Deborah had become a "strong one" (*gibbor*) in Israel, so had those who followed her inspiring call. If she speaks of herself as Deliverer, it is not without including those to whom she imparted her faithful and courageous "heart." Ver. 9 resumes ver. 2. The ground of all her praise, is that Israel turned again to God. This had been stated in ver. 2; here, by way of farther transition from ver. 7, she adds the expression "my heart:" she has infused the new spirit into Israel. She has imparted her heart to the people, as a mother to her children. The "heart" is the seat of divine inspirations and hopes; it is the organ that praises, desires, and seeks after God. The contents of Deborah's heart flowed over into Israel. "If thou wilt go with me," says Barak, "then I will go." "My heart," she exclaims, "was with the orderers of Israel," with those who devoted themselves, so that they devoted themselves, when they devoted themselves as

יְהוָה of Israel.<sup>1</sup> The explanation of יְהוָה has been thought more difficult than it is. It has already been remarked above, that the duty of a Judge was to execute the *mishpat*, the law of Israel, according to the ordinances of Moses. Whenever a Judge reintroduced the observance of the law, divine order sprang up anew among the people. Now, יְהוָה and יִשְׁעֵי are ever conjoined (cf. Ex. xv. 25). "What nation is there," asks Dent. iv. 8, "that has such *chukkin* and *mishpatim*?" "Hear, O Israel," reiterates Moses, in Dent. v. 1, "the *chukkin* and *mishpatim* which I speak in your ears." "Joshua made a covenant with the people (Josh. xxiv. 25), and set them *chok* and *mishpat*." What the *Shophet* is for the *mishpat*, that the *Chokek* is for the *chok*. Both words have the same

grammatical form; both have the same historical relations. Whoever watched over the *chok* of Israel, was a *chokek*. They were the Orderers of Israel; for *chok* is the "order" resulting from law. The men who followed Deborah, the leaders of the people, who staked their lives for Israel's nationality in God, were not *shophetim*, — for that word was already used in a definitely restricted sense; but to the name *chokekim*, which the prophetess gives them, they were justly entitled. They were men of law and national order.

Ver. 10. Praise God. The Song of Deborah is a hymn of praise to God: praise forms the keynote to all its variations. The refrain of ver. 2 is here repeated, because the thought of ver. 2 has come up in a new form. The arrangement of the poem is delicate and beautiful. Ver. 2 called on all to praise God. Thereupon she herself began to sing, ver. 3: "I will praise;" her own personality comes to view in her song of God, and again in the saving power through which she became a mother of Israel. From ver. 9 she transfers the work of praise to others. The self-devotion of "her heart" had communicated itself to the people. "Praise God," she resumes; but now they are to sing who have been delivered, and enjoy the fruits of victory. The whole Song is a hymn of freedom. How extreme and miserable was the recent oppression! The country was full of danger, intercourse interrupted, life enslaved. But now everything is free again. Every kind of movement is practicable. The highways are secure. Therefore, praise is to employ all who enjoy this return of rest. Whoever now is able to travel, without being hindered, robbed, or put in peril of his life, is to thank God who restored him this privilege. They who can ride, rest, or walk in peace again — for now animals are not stolen, tents are not plundered, foot-travellers are not murdered, — are to know and proclaim the preciousness of this new blessing. It is the habit of Biblical writers to comprehend the various movements of persons under the terms "walking, standing, and sitting" (cf. Ps. i. 1). Here, where the freedom of the open country is spoken of, riding is naturally mentioned in the place of standing, which was included in the other expressions. The riders are represented as riding on *חֲמֹרֹת*. Tu themselves "Orderers," etc. The latter explanation, merely hinted at by Dr. Cassel, is that commonly adopted by expositors. Bachmann remarks that if the first idea had been intended, it would have been more clearly expressed [Ta.]

[1 In this sentence our author seems to combine two different explanations of יְהוָה, etc., namely: 1. I imparted my spirit to the "Orderers" of Israel, by virtue of which they became such; and, 2. My heart loves those who proved

ride on asses, was certainly a well-known custom (cf. Judg. x. 4; xii. 14); but the mention of "white," or as it is commonly rendered, "white-dappled" asses, would not be very suitable. Even

though the connection of the word *נִצְרוֹת* with those roots which signify "to glisten," should be finally established, still it will always seem more appropriate to refer it to the beautiful, ornamented coverings that served for saddles. But there seems to be also a philological affinity between *tsachar* and what the Greeks and Romans called *σάγμα*, *σάγμ*, *sagma*,<sup>1</sup> and the Germans *saumsattel* (pack-saddle). Asses, we know, carried burdens: provisions, corn, wine, etc. (Gen. xlii. 25; xlv. 23; 1 Sam. xxv. 18; cf. Bochart, *Hieroz.* i. 184). They are to this day the important beast of burden in Palestine; and to leave the ass unladen, even on steep mountain paths, is considered injurious (Ritter, xvii. 295). The Targum (Jonathan), in its rendering of Lev. xv. 9, uses the word *סָגְמָה*; for

*נָצַר*, and not *נִצְרָה*, is to be read in its text at that place (a fact overlooked by Sachs, *Beiträge zur Sprachf.*, note 2, 196). The thought suggests itself naturally that restored freedom and security must have been of special value to those who transported important and costly articles. The passage becomes peculiarly significant, if brought into connection with the safety of traffic and intercourse, consequent upon the enemy's destruction. — **And sit on mats.** Since here also the blessings of freedom are the subject of discourse, those only can be meant who were accustomed to sojourn in tents and tent-villages. "To spread the covering," and "to pitch the tent," are to this day equivalent expressions. "To sit on cloths," was the poetic phrase for dwelling in the open country, in hamlets, oases, and on highways, without needing the protection of walls and fortifications. *מַטֵּי* (mats)

is undoubtedly a plural of *מַט*, garment. It is in keeping with the make of ancient, especially of oriental dress, that the various terms for garment, covering, cloth, are more indefinite and interchangeable than in modern times.<sup>2</sup> Such, for instance, is the case with *בִּגְד*, garment (Num. iv. 6-13); compare also *קִכְיֹת*, covering (Dent. xxii. 12). For the establishment of this general signification of *מַטֵּי*, Teller has rendered meritorious service. In a manuscript note in a copy of his "*Note Criticae*," now in my possession, he directs attention to *ιούδιον* as a cognate word. At all events, that also has the double sense of garment and covering, or cloth. The same, as is well known, is the case with *εσθῆς* and *vestis*. The word, mats (Latin, *matta*), in the translation above, is used merely for the sake of assonance; a philological connection between it and the Hebrew word is not

discoverable. — *וְלִכְלִי עֲלֵיהֶם*, foot-travellers, on the proper public roads. They too are no longer driven to seek winding paths. All, whether they ride, sit, or walk, have become free. Therefore, sing praise to God! *שִׁירָה*, to celebrate in song, as the Psalmist uses it (Ps. cxlv. 5): "Words of thy wonders will I sing" (*שִׁירָה*).

Ver. 11. The prophetess continues to depict the wonderful change from servitude to freedom. While the enemy had the upper hand, there was security only within the gates; up to the threshold of these, the inhabitants were hunted and pursued. A lively conception of such a condition of society, may be obtained from the history of Germany from the 13th to the 16th century, when it often happened that large cities were at war with their neighbors. In Palestine, cities being built on hill-tops, water must be procured outside of the gates. It was at a well, at the time of water-drawing (Gen. xxiv. 11), that Eliezer met Rebecca, coming out of the city. In time of war, this water-drawing was a dangerous occupation. The crowd was great, and every one wished to be the first to get away. Consequently, there was no lack of contention and vociferation. How all that is changed! Now the maidens draw leisurely and merrily, praising God the while, who has restored quiet and security. The philological explanation agrees perfectly with this exposition. Verse 11 does not depend on ver. 10; it introduces a new thought.

*יִמְחַצְצִים* is to be taken or read as *יִמְחַצְצִים*, i. e. as participle of the piel *חָצַץ*, to strive, quarrel, *rixari* (cf. Num. xxvi. 9; Ps. lx. 2; etc.), connected with the niphel *חָצַץ*, often used of persons who strive and contend with each other (Deut. xxv. 11; Ex. ii. 13; etc.).<sup>3</sup> The "voice" of those who thus contend is wont to attract attention; and a voice is now also heard: *וְתִפְּזוּ*, there they sing aloud, there resounds the song of those who praise the mercy of God. (*תִּפְּזוּ* from *תָּפַח*, piel, imperfect, 3d person, plural, to sound, to sing; Sanskrit, *tāpa*, *tōvos*, German *tönen*.) The harsh voice of contention is replaced by the sounds of praise. The burden of this praise? The benefits of God — the benefits which his all-disposing arm has bestowed on Israel, in that, after their self-surrender and return to Him, He has made them free again from the enemy. The consequence of his interposition is *חֵירוֹן*, freedom: Israel is free again, and no longer depends on walls for safety. *חֵירוֹן* is derived from *פָּרוּ*, just as *חֵירוֹן* from *פָּרַץ*. It contains the notion of that which is free, of freedom, as it is expressed by the prophet Zechariah, quite in the spirit of our Song, when he says

1 For further philological comparisons, see Benfey, i. 433, and Dieffenbach, *Celtica*, i. 85.

2 The same may be said of the use of the articles themselves. The popular custom of spreading out garments, like carpets or cloths, for persons to ride or walk over, is sufficiently familiar from the history of our Lord and the usages of both Greeks and Romans.

3 It does not appear how a piel *חָצַץ* can possibly be obtained from a niphel *חָצַץ*. The form *יִמְחַצְצִים*, in the text, can only be derived from *יִמְחַצְצִים*, either directly or indirectly. In the latter case it would be a denominative

from *חָצַץ*, an arrow, and would mean "archers;" so Bertheau, Keil, and many other interpreters, both ancient and modern. Many, perhaps most expositors, however, prefer the direct derivation from *חָצַץ*, to divide, but with various modifications of the radical idea. For a full discussion of the word and the interpretations it has received, see Bachmann, l. pp. 351-359; it must suffice here to say that he translates it, *Beuteheilen*, "those who divide the spoil." They (he explains) who frequent the places of drawing water are to praise the righteous acts of Jehovah, with the joyful voice of those who divide the spoil, cf. Isa. ix. 2 (3). — Tr.]

(chapter ii. 8, 9 (4, 5)): "Jerusalem shall dwell open (פָּתוּחָהּ, i. e. without walls); and I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about." When Israel devotes itself to God, it is at rest; accordingly, after the deeds of the several Judges are related, it is constantly added, "and the land had rest." Then enemies are powerless; exposed hamlets are secure; God is their protection. There, at the cisterns, they praise the goodness of God which manifests itself in this newly recovered freedom.

When the people of God hastened down to the gates. Here also the beauty of the internal arrangement of the Song comes prominently to view. Verse 8 says, they chose themselves new gods, **אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים**; verse 9—interrupted by the praise of God, but resumed in the last line of ver.

11,—when they devoted themselves to God, **אֲזַיְדָרָה לַיהוָה**. When the people apostatized, they were pressed up to their very gates, and fled; when, by self-surrender, they became a people of God, they rushed boldly down to the gates and through them. The consequence of the first was flight; that of the second, impetuous attack.<sup>1</sup> In the former case, among forty thousand there was not a man capable of making resistance; in the latter—and here with the Song enters on the delineation of the conflict,—it was a small band who threw themselves upon the mighty. In vers. 9-11 the prophetess, by praising God for freedom, interrupted the progress of her Song's narrative, just as she does in vers. 3-5 and in ver. 12, to which and the following verses we now pass on.

<sup>1</sup> [Keil and others connect the last clause of ver. 11, not with ver. 9; but with the immediately preceding praise for victory. "After this victory," says Keil, "the people descended again to its gates, from the mountains and hiding-places whither it had betaken itself for safety from the

enemy (ver. 6 f.)—entered again into the plains of the land, into the cities now relieved of enemies." Similarly, Bachmann. Dr. Cassel's translation of **אֲזַיְדָרָה** by 'when' is against the usage of the word.—Ta.]

#### DELINEATION OF THE VICTORS AND THE VICTORY.

Vers. 12-23.

- 12 Awake, awake Deborah!  
Awake, awake, compose the song!  
Barak, arise!—conquer thy conquest,  
Thou son of Abinoam!
- 13 Then down against the robust rushed a remnant,  
The People of God rushed with me against the powerful.<sup>1</sup>
- 14 From Ephraim's stock, the victors of Amalek;  
After thee (marched) Benjamin against thy foes,<sup>2</sup>  
Masters came from Machir,  
Men skillful with the accountant's pencil<sup>3</sup> distinguished Zebulun.
- 15 But the first<sup>4</sup> in Issachar were with Deborah,  
Yea, Issachar was the basis of Barak,  
When into the valley his men threw themselves on foot,<sup>5</sup>—  
While by the brooks abode Reuben's great investigators.<sup>6</sup>
- 16 Why sitt'st thou by the folds, listening to the shepherd's flute?  
By the brooks Reuben has great scrutinizers.
- 17 Gilead stays beyond the Jordan:  
But, Dan, how didst thou sail in ships!<sup>7</sup>  
Asher sits on the sea shore, sheltered in his bays,
- 18 But Zebulun hazarded his soul unto death,  
With Naphtali, upon the high plain of the field.
- 19 Kings came to fight—Kings of Canaan fought,  
At Taanach and by Megiddo's waters,—  
Satisfaction-money<sup>8</sup> gained they none.
- 20 From heaven strove the stars,<sup>9</sup>  
They strove from their stations with Sisera.
- 21 Kishon's stream swept them away—  
A stream of succours was Kishon's stream,—  
Tread strongly on, my soul!<sup>10</sup>
- 22 When struck the sounding hoof of the rushing steed,

- Of the flying strong ones ! <sup>11</sup>  
 23 The ban on Meroz, commands the messenger of God, the ban ! —  
 The ban on its inhabitants ;  
 Because they came not to the help of the People of God,  
 Of the People of God against the powerful. <sup>12</sup>

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 13. — This rendering of ver. 13 supposes the Hebrew text to be pointed and divided thus :

אֶזְרָא יָבֹר שָׂרִיר לְאֹדֵרִים  
 עִם יְהוָה יָבֹר לִי בְּנִפְיָוִים :

So also the LXX. (in Cod. Vat.) and many expositors. The most serious objection to it is, that as it is the easier reading, the Masorites must have had strong traditional grounds for preferring one more difficult. The verse has been translated and interpreted in a great variety of ways ; but the view of Dr. Cassel commends itself strongly, especially when compared with ch. iv. 14. Our English version seems to take יָבֹר as imperf. apoc. Piel from יָבַר, after the example of several Jewish grammarians and interpreters. — Ta.]

[2 Ver. 14. — Dr. Cassel's rendering of the first line of ver. 14 — מִנִּי אֶפְרַיִם שָׂרְשָׁם בְּעַמְלֶק — is, *Aus Ephraim's Art, die Amaleksieger*. It does not clearly appear how he would translate the passage literally, but the following would probably express his view : " Out of Ephraim (came) their root (who were) against Amalek." The "root," then, according to our author's exposition (see below), would be Joshua, in his relation to those whom he led to victory against "Amalek." So far as שָׂרְשָׁם is concerned, this interpretation has full as much in its favor as that which makes it mean "dwelling-place." On the rendering of עַמְלֶקִי, see the commentary. The majority of expositors, would probably accept the rendering of the two lines given by Dr. Robinson (*Bibl. Repos.* 1831) : —

"Out of Ephraim (came those) whose dwelling is by Amalek ;

After thee (was) Benjamin among thy hosts."

But in a document the language of which is so obscure as that of the Song of Deborah, much necessarily depends on the conception formed of the connection in which one passage stands with another. Now, while the majority of interpreters assume that ver. 14 speaks of such as took part in the war against Jabin and Sisera, our author maintains that it dwells on the fame of those who did not take part in this war, in order by this comparison to exalt that of those who did. On the decision of this question the interpretation in detail of the whole verse depends. Which of the two conflicting views is true, is not a matter to be discussed here, but it is certain that ch. iv. is very favorable to our author's side, cf. the com. below. — Ta.]

[3 Ver. 14. — The rendering of this line turns on שֶׁבֶט כֹּהֵן. The Targum, Pesbuto, and most ancient expositors, explain it of the "stylus of the writer ;" while most moderns translate it "the staff of the leader." Compare the remarks in the preceding note. — Ta.]

[4 Ver. 15. — Dr. Cassel probably reads שָׁחִי, with Bertheau, Keil, and most expositors. The preposition בְּ after the construct state is not unusual in poetry, cf. 2 Sam. i. 21 ; Job xviii. 2 ; etc. Some regard שָׁחִי as an unusual plural (cf. Ges. *Gram.* 87, 1, c), or as an archaic form of the construct (so Ewald, *Gram.* 211, c). — Ta.]

[5 Ver. 15. — On בְּרִנְלֵי, compare "Grammatical" note on ch. iv. 10 ; also ch. viii. 5 ; 2 Sam. xv. 17 ; etc. — Ta.]

[6 Ver. 15. — הִקְמִי לֵב ; Dr. Cassel, *Ergründer*. For הִקְמִי לֵב, in the next verse, he has *Ergrübler*, which admirably reproduces both the paranomasia and the irony of the original. הִקְמִי and הִקְמִי are, of course, abstract nouns, followed by the geotiv of the subject to which they pertain. — Ta.]

[7 Ver. 17. — "Aber Dan, was zogst du auf Schiffen aus !" Our author probably takes בָּהָר in its most usual sense, "to sojourn ;" to sojourn in or on ships, readily suggesting the idea of sailing in ships. Most expositors translate : "And Dan, why abides he at the ships ?" The prepositionless accusative is as easy or as difficult in one case as in the other. — Ta.]

[8 Ver. 19. — בָּנֵי פְּתָח : Dr. Cassel, *Geld zur Busse*, "penance money," cf. the Commentary below. Bertheau, Keil, and others, taking בָּנֵי in its Arabic sense of *frustum* (cf. the root בָּנַע), translate : "not a piece of silver did they take ;" but against the Hebrew use of the word. — Ta.]

[9 Ver. 20. — Dr. Cassel, following many previous expositors, alters the Masoretic text division by transferring "the stars" from the second to the first clause. But it is justly objected to this change that it reduces the second clause to a mere repetition by which nothing is added to the idea already expressed in the first. In the next line, the word מִסְלָה signifies, "a causeway," "highway." Dr. Cassel's rendering, *Statten*, places, is manifestly chosen for the sake of alliteration : *Sie stritten von ihren Statten mit Sisera* ; compare the English imitation above. — Ta.]

[10 Ver. 21. — הִדְרְכִי בְּאֵשִׁי לֵוִי. This line has been very variously interpreted. It is now generally agreed, however, that it is an address of the Singer to herself. הִדְרְכִי is the jussive of the second person, cf. Ges. *Gram.* 48, a. לֵוִי may either be taken as an adverbial accusative (= בֵּינוֹ), or as the direct object after the verb. Dr. Cassel decides for the former, after Herder, Justi, Bertheau, Ewald, Keil ; Dr. Bachmann, with Schourer, Köhler, Holmann, &c., prefers the latter, and takes לֵוִי as the abstract for the concrete : "Tread down, my soul, the strong ones !" cf. Robbins, in *Bibl. Sacra*. In either case, the incitement of the line may be directed to the continuation of the Song, or to

the prosecution of the pursuit of the enemy. Bachmann prefers the latter; but the former seems to us more striking and appropriate. — Tr.]

[11 Ver. 22. — Dr. Cassel: —

*Da der Jagenden Rosshuf hallend aufschlug,  
Der entjagenden Starken.*

On the translation of  $\text{כִּן}$  by "when," cf. note 1, on p. 97. In the second line of the above rendering, the  $\text{כִּן}$  does not come to its rights, and the suffix in  $\text{הַפְּרִי$  is neglected. The  $\text{כִּן}$  is causal, and the suffix  $\text{י}$  goes back to the collective  $\text{כֹּסֶם}$  of the first line, so that it seems necessary to explain  $\text{הַפְּרִי}$  of men, not, as our author (see below) of horses. The best rendering of the verse is probably that adopted, for substance, by Keil, Bachmann, and many others: —

"Then the hoofs of the horses smote the ground,  
Because of the galloping of their valiant riders."

The last expression may very well be taken ironically: "runaway heroes." On the repetition of  $\text{הַיְּהוּדִים}$ , to indicate continuance, see Ewald, *Gram.*, 313 a; cf. also Ges. *Gram.* 108, 4. — Tr.]

[12 Ver. 23. — On the above translation of ver. 23 it is to be remarked, 1. That the word rendered "han," is  $\text{הָאֵר}$ , and does not, like  $\text{הָרָה}$ , imply the actual destruction of the object against which it is aimed. 2. That with the LXX (Cod. Vat.) our author transfers  $\text{הָאֵר}$  from the second line to the first. On the construction of  $\text{הָאֵר}$  (which below but not here, he changes (with the LXX.) into  $\text{הָאֵר}$ ), cf. Ges. *Gram.* 131, 4 b. 3. That the expression "People of God" is our author's interpretation of what is meant by "coming to the help of Jehovah," cf. below. 4. That  $\text{גִּבְבֹּרִים}$  is by most recent expositors rendered, "among (or, with) heroes," namely, the warriors of Israel. Compare the Septuaginta and Vulgate; the Targum takes  $\text{גִּבְבֹּרִים}$  in the hostile sense. — Tr.]

#### EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 12. With the words of ver. 11, "when the People of God hastened down to the gates," i. e. out to battle, the prophetess transfers herself into the midst of the conflict. Verse 12 presents a reminiscence of the battle song. It recalls the rallying cry. Wake up! wake up! ( $\text{עֲרִירִי}$  from  $\text{עָרִיר}$ , cf. Isa. li. 9.) "Awake, awake!" is addressed to Deborah, urging her to fire the soldiery through her song; "arise!" refers to Barak. For she sang, and Barak fought.  $\text{וְשָׂבִיהָ שְׂבִיבָה}$ , "lead forth thy captives." To be able to carry away captives, was evidence of a complete victory. When Jerusalem and Samaria fell, the people were carried away prisoners. The captivity of the enemy ends the conflict. The reason why a perpetual ban of destruction was pronounced against the enemies who attacked the host of Israel, in the wilderness, near Arad, was not merely that they fought against Israel, but that they also "took some of their prisoners" (Num. xxi. 1). The completeness of God's victory, as the 68th Psalm celebrates it, is indicated by the expression, ver. 19 (18):  $\text{וְשָׂבִיהָ שְׂבִיבָה}$ , "thou hast carried away the captives."<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 13. The prophetess now continues to depict the surprising contrasts that have arisen from Israel's return to God. A  $\text{שְׂרִירִי}$ , a remaining few, by no means all Israel, but a small band — like the remnant ( $\text{שְׂרִירִים}$ ) whom, according to the prophet Joel (ch. ii. 32 (iii. 5)), God calls, — takes up the conflict with  $\text{מְלָכִים אֲדִירִים}$ , mighty ones. (Cf. my discussion on Ps. viii. 2, in the *Lutherischen Zeitschr.*, 1860. "Mighty kings,"  $\text{מְלָכִים אֲדִירִים}$ , are slain by God, Ps. cxxxvi. 18). The next line runs parallel with this: "the people of God ( $\text{עַם יְהוָה}$ )"

charges against <sup>2</sup>  $\text{גִּבְבֹּרִים}$ ." *Gibborim* are warlike men of gigantic strength. It is applied here to enemies, as elsewhere to Nimrod, who also was an enemy. In the view of Scripture, God alone is the true *Gibbor* (Deut. x. 17, etc.). Usually, the *gibborim* conquer; but here the result is that of which Isaiah speaks (ch. xlix. 25), "the captives of the *gibbor* are taken away from him." There is a peculiar beauty in Deborah's mode of stating her own share in the war: "the People of God rushed for me ( $\text{לִי}$ ) against heroes." For my sake, she sings, at my call, with me, did they hazard the conflict with men of superior strength.

Vers. 14-16. It was truly a "remnant" that fought at the Kishon against Sisera. It was only a part of all Israel that was entitled to the honor of being styled the "People of God." A special renown must henceforth attach to those tribes who took part in the war, just as the Athenians never lost the glory of having alone gained the battle of Marathon. In Israel, as in Hellas, rivalries obtained between the different tribes. Considerations like these afford the proper introduction to ver. 14. Expositors have made its difficulties altogether insurmountable, by supposing that all the tribes here named assisted Barak.<sup>3</sup> But this supposition is utterly untenable: 1. The statement of ch. iv. is positive and definite, that only Zebulun and Naphtali fought on the plains of Issachar. It is moreover corroborated by the fact that, from her residence on Mount Ephraim, Deborah sends to just those tribes, because the oppression under which Israel suffered bore heaviest on them. 2. The question whether Ephraim and Benjamin took part in the war, could not have been overlooked by the narrator; for the direction of the march which he had to trace was altogether different from what, had they been combatants, it would have been. And why, in that case, would it have been necessary for Deborah to go with Barak to Kedesh? 3. It is contradicted by ver. 14 itself. Machir means

<sup>1</sup> [According to Bachmann the first half of ver. 12 contains the self-incitement of Deborah to begin the description of the battle, while the second half actually enters on the description with a reminiscence of ch. iv. 14. — Tr.]

<sup>2</sup>  $\text{וְיָרָה בְּגִבְבֹּרִים}$ . Cf. Judg. vii. 9,  $\text{וְיָרָה בְּמַחֲנֵהוּ}$ ; also Judg. vii. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Keil also has adopted this view

Gilead proper.<sup>1</sup> Manasseh as a whole cannot be intended by it (cf. the word מַחִיר). It is for the very purpose of designating a part that the term "Machir" is employed. But Deborah herself says, ver. 17, that Gilead did not take part in the campaign. Nor would it be at all apparent why Zebulun should be described by two different attributes (vers. 14 and 18), in relation to the same event. 4. If those tribes took part in the conflict, why does ver. 18 speak only of Zebulun and Naphtali? The Plateans, who alone stood by the Athenians in the day of battle, were not thus forgotten. The most ancient Jewish expositors, however, already perceived the more correct view to be taken of the verse: it is to be historically interpreted. The poet's mind, like the action itself, moves over the northern territory of Israel. The tribes of Judah and Simeon lie altogether beyond her present field of vision. But with the ancient glory of those tribes, whose territories stretched onward from Mount Ephraim — from the spot where she herself resided, near the border of Benjamin, — she compares that of the conquerors whom she led on. Each tribe had its own glorious traditions. No doubt, exclaims the prophetess, Ephraim is renowned, for out of him sprang he who was against Amalek. The ancients rightly understood this of Joshua, the conqueror of Amalek,<sup>2</sup> the pride of Ephraim, who was buried among them, and on whom, unquestionably, the Ephraimites always founded their claim to the leadership among the tribes. — מַחִירֵי בֶנְיָמִן, after thee, Benjamin against

thine enemies. Since מַחִירֵי בֶנְיָמִן (Aram. plur. c. suffix) manifestly answers to מַחִירֵי בֶנְיָמִן, the בֶּ, which with the latter means "against," must be taken in the same sense with the former. This is confirmed by the fact that the plural of עַם is always<sup>3</sup> applied to the "heathen," the "nations," and carries with it the idea of hostility against Israel.

מַחִירֵי בֶנְיָמִן means the hostile nations who stand arrayed against thee, — "thy heathen," so to speak, "thine enemies." "After thee," says the prophetess to Ephraim, "Benjamin advanced against thine enemies" — Benjamin, who bears the name of Wolf (Gen. xlix. 27). It is the fame of Ehud, that renders Benjamin illustrious. The old expositors understood these utterances of Deborah, concerning Benjamin and the other tribes, as prophetic. But such an explanation cannot be accepted. A prophetess who looked into the boundless and indefinite future, could not have compared tribe with tribe in a manner possible only when dealing with the facts of history. — By the side of the warlike fame of Ephraim and Benjamin, the prophetess places the peaceful renown of Machir and Zebulun. How far the sons of Machir distinguished themselves as *mechokekkin*, orderers of the law, we have, it is true, no information. But it is to be noticed that what is told of Jair, Judg. x. 4, connects itself with a Jair who lived as early as the time of Moses (Num. xxxii. 41). The sons of Machir were born "upon the knees" of their grandfather Joseph

(Gen. i. 23). It is only by supposing that the renown of Zebulun also, is one which existed previous to the war, that what is here said can be brought into easy and proper connection with what is said in ver. 18. Zebulun, formerly known only

for his מוֹשְׁכֵי בִשְׁבָט זְבֻלֻן, experts with the ciphering-pencil, had now become a people courageous unto death. Zebulun was a commercial tribe, like Zidon. The purple-trade especially occupied them. Consequently, the art of the *Sopher*, i. e. writing, reading, and ciphering, could not fail to be extensively practiced in this tribe. The *Sopher* appears also in Phœnician inscriptions; Gesenius compares him with the quaestors of Carthage, who held an office next in importance to that of the Suffetes (*Monum. Phœnic.*, 173). A like important office was held by the *Sopherim* at the courts of the Jewish kings. They are always named in conjunction with the high-priest (cf. 2 Sam. viii. 17; xx. 25; 1 Kgs. iv. 3; 1 Chron. xviii. 16; Isa. xxxvi. 3; 2 Kgs. xix. 2). The *Sopher* and the high-priest count the money found in the offering-box, 2 Kgs. xii. 10 (11). King Josiah sends his

*Sopher* Shaphan (שָׁפָן, cf. שִׁפְיָן, Elizaphaz, a Zebulonite, Num. xxxiv. 25) to the priest. It is he who reads the sacred book, which the priest has found, to the king (2 Kgs. xxii. 8). The commander-in-chief has a *Sopher* who enrolls the army (2 Kgs. xxv. 19; Jer. lii. 25). The uncle of David is celebrated as a wise man and a *Sopher* (1 Chron. xxvii. 32). The Psalmist praises the stylus of a ready *Sopher* (Ps. xlv. 1 (2)). The activity of a *Sopher* is everywhere pacific in its nature, demanding sagacity, and presupposing knowledge.

The stylus, עֶט, of the Psalmist, is the same as Deborah's שֹׁפָר, staff. It was an honor to Zebulun, that in the tribe there were able *Sopherim*, who could make the art which commerce had caused to flourish among them, subserve the internal and higher life of Israel. The word מַחִירֵי suggests a forcible picture; we see the writer artistically drawing the letters with his stylus. This constituted the ancient renown of the tribe. But the victory with Deborah at the Kishon, will not less highly exalt those who had a part in it. That thought forms the transition to ver. 15. Issachar, it is true, had not shared in the battle; but that did not diminish the significance of the tribe. Their territory was the theatre of the decision. Very much depended upon the attitude they assumed. Were the battle lost, Issachar must first bear the consequences. Nevertheless, their chiefs decided to hearken to Deborah. "The princes in Issachar were with Deborah." They surrounded Deborah, while Barak plunged into the valley. As Moses did not himself take the field against Amalek, but intrusted Joshua with the conduct of the battle while he prayed on the mount, so Deborah stood behind the battle-ranks, surrounded by Issachar, uttering blessings, or in case discouragement showed itself,<sup>4</sup> urging, encouraging, inspiring, in a manner similar perhaps to that which the German women were wont to adopt.<sup>5</sup> It has been well ob-

the combatants by their *zangit* (singing). Cf. Wetzstein *Hauran*, 145.

<sup>5</sup> This was still done by the women of the crusaders in the battle near Dorylaum, as Petrus Trudebod informs us (*Gesta Dei per Francos*, p. 782): "*Femina nostra in illa die fuerunt nobis in refugium . . . confortantes nos fortiter pugnantibus et viros protegentes.*" Cf. Wilken, *Gesch der Kreuzz.*, i. 155.

<sup>1</sup> Num. xxxii. 39; cf. Josh. xvii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> "In the land of Ephraim" there was a Mount of Amalek, cf. Judg. xii. 15.

<sup>3</sup> "Always" is too strong; cf. Gen. xlviii. 4; Lev. xxi. 1; Ezek. xviii. 18. — Tr.]

<sup>4</sup> As in conflicts of the Bedouin tribes, the Arab women at the present time still stand in the rear, and encourage

served that in the expression וַיִּשְׁתָּר בֶּן בָּרַק the word בֶּן is not the particle, but the noun. (Schnurrer was the first to adduce this from among various opinions collected together in the commentary of R. Tanchum.) בֶּן signifies the base, the pedestal (cf. Ex. xxx. 18); and in truth Issachar was this for the whole battle. It was fought on his territory, and his men formed the reserve of Barak, when that chieftain threw himself into the valley. בְּצִמְחָה שְׁלֵחַ בְּרַגְלָיו expresses the storm-like rapidity of Barak's movement. The Pual שְׁלֵחַ is to be taken in the sense of the Greek middle voice. — Presently the thought occurs to the prophetess that still other neighboring tribes could have helped, Reuben, namely, and Gilead, beyond the Jordan, Dan at its sources, Asher on the coast; but their assistance did not come. Deborah does not blame the distant tribes, as Judah, Simeon, Ephraim, Benjamin, Gad, but only the near ones. Reuben at that time cannot have dwelt to the east of the Dead Sea, but according to Num. xxxii. 26, etc., must have had a more northerly location, reaching as far up as the banks of the Jabbok.<sup>1</sup> There he must have dwelt, pasturing his herds by his brooks. פְּלָגוֹת, plural of

פְּלָגָה, like פְּלָג, brook, stream (cf. my exposition of Ps. i. *Luther. Zeitschr.*, 1859, p. 537). Reuben, like the tribes beyond the Jordan generally, had been called on by Barak to take part in the war against Sisera. In like manner was Sparta summoned by Athens, before Marathon. And like Sparta, Reuben considered long. Hence the derisive description of the men of Reuben as חֲקֵרֵי לֵב

and חֲקֵרֵי לֵב, investigators and scrutinizers. They reflect upon the necessity and feasibility of acting, till the time for it is past. Reuben sits between the folds, and prefers to listen to the shepherd's flute, שְׁרִיקָה, שְׁרִיקוֹת עֲזָרִים, pipe, flute, from שָׁרַק, *sibilare*, to whistle, to hiss, according to the root and form of the name, is nothing else than the *syrix*, pipe, whose invention Hellenic mythology ascribed to Pan. What is here said of Reuben, that he amuses himself with listening to the herdsmen's flutes (עֲזָרִים is properly the herd), is the same that Homer says, *Iliad*, xviii. 525: "νοῦδες τερπόμενοι σύριγγι."

Ver. 17. And Gilead tarries beyond Jordan. The fact that what is here said of Gilead might be equally applied to Reuben, since both dwelt beyond the Jordan, is suggestive of the excuse which Gilead may have urged in distinction from Reuben. Reuben reflected; but Gilead denied that the efforts of Barak concerned him: did he not live beyond the Jordan?

But Dan, how didst thou sail in ships!<sup>2</sup> Jewish tradition places the occurrence related in

1 Only those tribes can have been censured who stood in close geographical connection with Naphtali and Zebulun, not those whose position inclined them to southern alliances; Ephraim, Benjamin, Judah, and Simeon, receive no censure; but Asher, Dan, and Gilead, do. How could Reuben be blamed, while Judah was not, if his seat were below at the Dead Sea?

2 אֲבִירוֹת, used only of sea-going vessels, cf. Prov. xxx. 19.

3 But מְרוֹם assuredly means height, an elevation

ch. xviii. before the time of Deborah. And to all appearance this seems to be the right view. For in its southern possessions the tribe of Dan did not hold the sea-coast (*Judg.* i. 34). Moreover, how should Deborah complain of the want of assistance from southern Dan, when she entered no such complaint against Judah? If, however, Dan had already removed to the vicinity of Naphtali, the complaint was very natural. The old expositors explain that "Dan had shipped his goods and chattels in order to cross the Jordan." But this is less simple than the supposition that Dan, like Zebulun, was engaged with the Phœnicians (Tyre) in maritime commerce, or at least pretended to be, as a reason for refusing Barak's summons. What renders this interpretation the more probable, is the fact that Deborah speaks next of Asher, "who dwells on the sea-shore." Jabin, king of Hazor, cannot have domineered over the coast, where the powerful maritime cities were in the ascendancy. Therefore Asher also had nothing to suffer from him. He dwells secretly in his harbors. It is noteworthy that what the singer here says of Asher, the blessing of Jacob says in the same words of Zebulun, לְהוֹף גַּיִּים וַיִּשְׁבֵּן, with an additional clause, however, concerning the pursuit of navigation.

Ver. 18. This verse puts it beyond all doubt that only Zebulun and Naphtali engaged actively in the conflict; for only to them refers the declaration that they "hazarded their souls unto death." (For the sake of the poetical parallelism Naphtali is put at the head of the second member, instead of making "Zebulun and Naphtali" the composite subject of the whole distich.) Their faith in Deborah's word was so firm, that they dared risk the unequal conflict even in the valley ("the high-plain of the field"). Therein consisted the uncommon sacrifice of these tribes. Hitherto, Israel had always given up the valleys (cf. *Judg.* i. 19, 34), because it could not overcome disciplined armies and chariots. Even down to the time of the later kings, it was considered invincible on the mountains (1 Kgs. xx. 23), which fact however implies that in the valleys it still continued to be otherwise. Hence, מְרוֹמֵי שָׂדֶה is to be understood, not of the "heights," but of the surface, of the field.<sup>3</sup> It was a fearful battle-crisis: a few against so many, a band of footmen against a host of iron chariots, a handful of mountaineers on the plain, a few tribal chieftains against the mighty.

Ver. 19. Kings came. This is to be understood figuratively, of eminent and powerful military leaders: Sisera was no king.<sup>4</sup> בָּצַע בָּקָה לָהּ, gain of money they obtained not. This is usually understood only of the booty, which the enemy hoped to obtain, but failed to get. But the troops of Zebulun and Naphtali can scarcely have appeared to promise a booty rich in money. It is therefore probable that the meaning of the proph-

above the general level, not surface. In connection with the facts of the history, the expression, it seems to me, can only mean either Mount Tabor or the higher parts of the plain of Esdraelon, as the gathering-place of the warriors, where they in thought and intention "scorned their lives." So Bachmann and many other expositors. — Tr.]

4 [On Taanach and Megiddo see at ch. i. 27. The "waters of Megiddo" undoubtedly refers to the Kishon. The Kishon valley was in like manner called the Valley of Megiddo, 2 Chron. xxxv. 22; Zech. xii. 11. Cf. *Rob. Bibl. Res.*, ii. 330. — Tr.]

etess includes something else. We know from instances of later times, that when the people did not feel themselves strong enough to cope with a threatening enemy, they sought to buy him off with money. Thus, in the reign of Rehoboam, Shishak, king of Egypt, took away all the treasures of the temple (1 Kgs. xiv. 26). Asa gave all the remaining gold and silver to Benhadad of Damascus (1 Kgs. xv. 18). Menahem collected a large amount of money in order to persuade the king of Assyria to turn back (2 Kgs. xv. 20). Siserā was not so successful. He neither obtained composition-money before the campaign, nor did he secure any booty after it. The troops and their leaders who had accompanied him, gained no profit from this expedition. Profit is the prominent idea in מַמְנוֹן; hence the Chaldee Paraphrast usually puts "Mammon" for it.

Vers. 20-22. From heaven fought the stars. Josephus has introduced into his narrative of this victory, the description of a thunder-storm, accompanied by wind and hail, by which the enemy were thrown into confusion. It is one of those pragmatical endeavors by which he seeks to facilitate belief for his Hellenic readers, and to make the miraculous more natural. The occasion for it was given by the expression, ch. iv. 15, "and God confounded them." The presence and effect of thunder and hail were inferred, by comparison, from two other passages, where a similar divinely-wrought confusion of the enemy is related. Thus in Josh. x. 10, 11, when Joshua fights against the enemy, it is said: "And the Lord confounded them, and as they fled cast down great hailstones upon them, that they died." So also 1 Sam. vii. 10: "And the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day, and confounded the Philistines." But there appears to be no necessity whatever for transferring these occurrences into our passage. The narrator is rather thinking of Ex. xiv. 24, which speaks of Pharaoh's confusion by God *without* thunder and hail. Nor is there any need of thunder and hail to confound an army. The confusion of Rosbach (Nov. 3, 1757) was not caused by the intervention of a storm. All that appears from the statements of ch. iv. and the Song of Deborah alone, is, that Barak and his faithful followers made a violent and sudden attack, before the numerous chariots had been placed in battle-array. This was done as night was coming on. When Joshua fought, sun and moon assisted him (Josh. x. 12): on Barak, the stars shone brightly, — which does not make a thunder-storm probable. Consistently with Israelitish conceptions, the help of the stars can only be understood of their shining.<sup>1</sup> Joshua also had come upon his enemies

suddenly (וַיִּהְיֶה, Josh. x. 9). Gideon, too, threw himself upon the hostile camp in the night. But not the stars alone assisted Barak in his heroic course. As the enemy, either for attack or in flight, wished to cross the Kishon, in the direction from Taanach and Megiddo, the swollen stream swept many of them into the arms of death. "The brook Kishon snatched (וַיִּקְחֶם) them away."

(וַיִּקְחֶם), in its Semitic forms, corresponds to the Indo-Germanic forms *rapere*, Ger. *raffen*, Sanskrit, *rup.*) It thus came to the help of Israel, and became a נַחֲלֵי קֶדְמוֹת, brook of succors. In what sense the Kishon should be especially called a brook of "ancient days," as many explain וַיִּקְחֶם, cannot be made out, not at least from Scripture.<sup>2</sup> The rendering "brook of battles," has little ground in philology. The repetition of "brook Kishon," is doubtless intended to suggest a definition of what sort of a stream the Kishon was for Israel on that day. It was not merely the scene of battle, but an instrument of help against the foe. וַיִּקְחֶם has frequently this sense, especially in poetical language. In Ps. lxxix. 8 the poet prays, "Let thy mercy come speedily to our help" (וַיִּקְחֶם); cf. Ps. lix. 11; xxi. 4. But in Deuteronomy, also, ch. xxiii. 5, it is said of Ammon and Moab that they did not help Israel with bread and water (לֹא-הִקְדִּמוּ מַיִם). *Kedumim* is the

plural of a form קֶדְמִי. The Kishon — thus exalts the poet — showed itself a helpful stream. The statement that it snatched the enemies away, presupposes its swollen condition. It is only after the rainy season that the Kishon runs full; for which reason the LXX. call it χειμαρρῶς, winter-flowing. In summer it is for the most part dried up; but in the spring it sends down a rushing flood. Ritter (xvi. 704, Gage's Transl. iv. 351) adduces the fact that on the 16th of April, 1799, in a conflict between the French and Turks, many of the latter perished in its raging waters. Hence we may infer that the time of Barak's battle is to be fixed in the latter part of April or the beginning of May. The Feast of Weeks fell in the same season.<sup>3</sup> Immediately after the narrative in Exodus, it is intimated that the manifestation on Sinai occurred in the beginning of the third month, and consequently coincided with the Feast of Weeks. The occurrence of the battle in a season devoted to such commemorations, explains with peculiar emphasis the opening lines of the Song, concerning the omnipotence of God on Sinai, "when the earth trem-

<sup>1</sup> [Bertheau takes the words "the stars fought," as figurative language, expressive of divine assistance. "From the decisive victory it is certain that God was with Israel and fought in the midst of them, ver. 13 [read according to the Masoretic text division]; that He himself threw the hostile host into confusion, ch. iv. 15; and that the strong arm of a higher Power directed the course of the battle. All this is clearly and vividly present to the mind of the Singer. Filled with the thoughts of God's wonderful aid, and venturing under the impulses of a bold enthusiasm to give definite representation of his distinctly recognized yet mysterious work on earth and in the midst of men, it is to her as if the heavens, the eternal dwelling-place of the holy God, had bowed themselves down to earth, or — to use the language of the text — as if the stars, forsaking their usual orbits, had fought against Siserā. Quite similar is the imagery in Ps. xviii." The same view is adopted by Bachmann and many others. — Ta.]

<sup>2</sup> [Bachmann, who adopts this interpretation, explains it from the fact "that the ancient wonder of the Red Sea appears to repeat itself at the Kishon." As in the whole of the present wonderful deliverance Deborah beholds a renewal of the glorious occurrences at Sinai (ver. 4), so she finds in the experience of Siserā's army at the Kishon a renewal of that which befell the Egyptians at the Red Sea; and thus the Kishon in her view takes the place of the Red Sea which that ancient wonder had rendered famous." Far fetched; although suggested by several earlier Rabbinical and ecclesiastical expositors. — Ta.]

<sup>3</sup> A Jewish hymn of the Middle Ages, by R. Meir, still sung in the synagogues, at the Passover (*Le! Shemurim*), transports the battle into the Passover night; for which, however, it has no chronological grounds, but only the theological principle that all achievements of freedom were accomplished in that night.



tion." The ancients had a not ungrounded tradition, — to prove which this is not the place, — for regarding the lxviii Psalm as a song for the Feast of Weeks; and it is just that psalm which incorporated into itself the introductory parts of Deborah's Song.

While singing, the prophetess sees herself transported into the tumult of the battle. The stream rushes violently onward, — the perishing foes contend with its whirling eddies. The roar of the conflict, its battle-cries, and shouts of victory, are around her. In the midst of her Song, she addresses her own soul, as the Greeks addressed their muse, with words of animation and refreshment: Tread vigorously on, my soul! Her genius hovers over the valley of conflict; her ear feels the hoof-strokes of the flying foes, who, panic stricken before Israel, furiously dash off into flight. What a triumph! the "strong ones" (אַבִּירִים) run away!

אַבִּירִי is to run fast, used of a horse's trot, like the Sanskrit *dru*, Greek *δρᾶναι* (*διδράσκω*). אַבִּירִים, as Bochart already remarked (*Hieroz.* i. 99), is probably used here, as in Jer. viii. 16; xlvii. 3, of the war-horses, who with their rattling chariots ran wildly off. In that case, the might of the steeds stands representatively for that of the warriors themselves.

Ver. 23. The flying enemy had not succeeded even in escaping, if all places of the surrounding country had done their duty. The prophetess utters sentence of condemnation against the inhabitants of Meroz, because they rendered no assistance. Their aid had probably been important in the pursuit. Hence, their conduct is referred to here, — before the blessing upon Jael. The verse

1 It is altogether erroneous to take אַבִּירִים here of the heroes of Israel. For just therein consisted the faithlessness of the inhabitants of Meroz, that though Israel was threatened by heroes and mighty men, they offered no assistance.

first introduces a messenger of God, crying, "Curse ye Meroz, curse it!" and then continues itself, "Cursed are its inhabitants." The "messenger of God" is the singer herself, sent by the Spirit of God to consummate the victorious achievement. In obedience to the Spirit's prompting, she with Barak pronounces the national ban against the faithless city. For it came not to the help of

God (לְעֶזְרָת יְהוָה), that is, to the help of the

עַם יְהוָה, the People of God, as in vers. 11 and

13. It left the cause and the good gifts of God to their fate, when they were endangered in battle against heroes.<sup>1</sup> The greater the responsibility, the severer the punishment. The higher the cause to be served, the blacker the treason that abandons it. To ascertain, at this date, the site of Meroz can hardly be possible. It has indeed been supposed to be identical with a place on Robinson's map, southwest of Endor,<sup>2</sup> called *Kefr Musr* (cf. Ritter, xv. 399 [Gage's Transl. ii. 316]); but neither the name of the place is certain, nor its situation entirely suitable; and, finally, considering the popular odium which the Song of Deborah affixed to the name, it is by no means probable that it remained unchanged, and actually perpetuated itself. Procopius confirms this surmise, when he observes (*Reland, Palestina*, p. 896), that concerning the name he had found nothing anywhere, not even in Hebrew expositions. The curse itself most probably implied, as in Josh. vi., the utter destruction of the place, although nothing further is said of it. In later times, this verse became a *locus classicus* for the Tahaudic exposition of the ban against persons and things (*Mond Katan*, 16, a; *Shebnoth*, 36, a; Selden, *d' Synedriis*, p. 84, etc.).

2 The battle took place south of Endor. That Barak in his swift descent from the heights met the enemy there first, appears from the remarkable statement of Ps. lxxxiii. 10 which speaks of Endor as a point of the battle-field.

#### THE FATE OF THE ENEMY.

Vers. 24-31.

- 24 Blessed among women be Jael,  
The wife of Heber, the Kenite,  
Blessed among women of the tents!
- 25 He asks for water, she gives him milk,  
In a beautiful bowl she carries him cream.
- 26 With her left she takes the nail,<sup>1</sup>  
With her right the heavy hammer,  
Swings it over Sisera, smites his head,  
Crashes through, and transpierces his temples.<sup>2</sup>
- 27 At her feet he curls himself and falls,  
At her feet he lies, curls himself again, and falls,  
And as he curls himself again, falls — dead!<sup>3</sup>
- 28 Through the window she looks, at the lattice laments the mother of Sisera:  
Why lingers his car so long,  
Why stay the steps of his chariots?

- 29 Wise ladies answer her,<sup>4</sup>  
 Herself also refutes her own words:  
 30 Will they not find booty and divide it?  
 Two maidens for each man;  
 Booty of purple robes for Sisera,  
 Yea, booty of purple robes!  
 Color-embroidered vestments, two for each neck of the captured!<sup>5</sup>  
 31 So may all thy foes fall, O God,  
 But those who love thee rise as the sun in his strength!  
 And the land rested forty years.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 26. — The rendering of יָדָהּ by "her left hand," — if admissible at all, — must be justified by the assumption of an intended contrast with יְמִינָהּ in the next line. The form הִנְשִׁילָהּ, according to Oesenius, *Gram.* 47, 3, 3, is an improper use of the 3d plural for the 3d singular; according to Green, 88, p. 119, it stands for הִנְשִׁילָהּ — "her hand, she puts it forth;" according to Ewald, 191 c, it is simply the 3d fem. sg. הִנְשִׁילָהּ, with an additional feminine characteristic (הָ) in order to distinguish it from the 3d masc. singular. Ewald's view is also adopted by Bertheau, Keil, and (in the main, by) Bachmann, and is probably the true one. — Tr.]

[2 Ver. 26. — Dr. Cassel's rendering of the last two lines of this verse is as follows: —

*Schwingt ihn auf Sisra, schlägt ihn an's Haupt,  
 Schmettert nach und durchbohrt ihm die Schläfe.*

We have endeavored to reproduce his alliteration as nearly as possible, but have nevertheless lost the paranomasia of הָלָהּ with הַלְמוֹת, hammer, in the preceding line, for which our author has *Schlägel*, mallet, beetle. The awful energy of the lines, and their onomatopoeic character, may be distantly and somewhat inelegantly imitated in English, thus —

"She hammers Sisera, mashes his head,  
 Smashes (him), and crashes through his temples." — Tr.]

[3 Ver. 27. — The above translation of this verse disregards the Masoretic text-division (according to which שָׁכַב, "he lies," belongs to the first line), and takes פָּתְּשָׁהּ in a temporal instead of local sense. The radical meaning of פָּתְּשָׁהּ is probably "to bend or contract one's self" (cf. Ges. *Lex.*, Keil, Bachmann), the usual sense "to kneel" being derivative. The mortally wounded Sisera, pinned to the ground (ch. iv. 21), involuntarily curls himself together, as Dr. Cassel says — i. e. brings his knees forward and upward. But Dr. Cassel's idea that this involuntary muscular contraction was repeated three times is inconsistent with the proper local sense of פָּתְּשָׁהּ, and with the repeated קָפַל. Dr. Cassel, it is true, seeks to avoid the latter difficulty by supposing (see the com. below) that Sisera "seeks to rise, and falls back;" but how could he rise so as to fall back when his head was pinned to the ground? It is altogether more likely that in this song of victory, קָפַל is used as in military language (and perhaps not without a touch of contemptuous irony), for "to die," "to be slain," in this sense, קָפַל, like *minirev, cadere*, and our "fall," is frequently used, cf. the *Lexica*. The repetition of the idea of the first line in the second and third springs from the great interest of the singer in the destruction of the much-dreaded chieftain, and serves to intensify the impression to be produced on those who hear her. Accordingly, we would render: —

At her feet he curls himself, he falls, he lies.  
 At her feet he curls himself, he falls!  
 Where he curls himself, there he falls — destroyed.

So also Bertheau, Keil, Bachmann. For אֵין, in the sense of "at" cf. remarks of Hengstenberg on Zech. xiii. 6, in *Christol.* iv. 106, Elinb. edition. — Tr.]

[4 Ver. 29. — The above translation neglects both the suffix in שְׂרוּתֶיהָ, and the construct state of חֶרֶב (fem. of חֶרֶב). In תַּעֲנֶנְהָ Dr. Cassel apparently finds the 3d fem. sing. imperf. with the suffix of the 3d fem. sing. But as the subject is plural, it is better to take תַּעֲנֶנְהָ as standing for תַּעֲנֶנְהוּ. The accented *e* in the latter form seeks to strengthen itself by doubling the following consonant, in which case the *v* naturally falls away, although it may also remain, as in Mic. vii. 10. Cf. Ewald, *Gram.* 17 c. The true rendering of the second line of this verse is much disputed. According to Keil the sense of the line is: "Sisera's mother, however, does not allow herself to be quieted by the speeches of her wise ladies, but repeats the anxious question, 'Why does Sisera delay to come?'" He and Bachmann translate the verse thus: —

"The wise ones of her princesses answer:  
 — But she repeats to herself her words —". — Tr.]

[6 Ver. 30. — On our author's text-division in this verse, see the Commentary below. Bachmann, who adheres to the Masoretic punctuation, translates as follows: —

"Will they not find, divide booty?"

A maiden, two maidens for the head of a man,

Booty of colored garments for Sisera.

Booty of colored garments, (of) variegated work,

A colored garment, two variegated for the neck of the booty."—**TR.**]

#### EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

The closing part of Deborah's Song has justly been regarded as a specimen of poetical representation that cannot be surpassed. In it the singer shows that she is a woman. The triumph with which Jael's deed is praised and Sisera's mother mocked, evinces an almost passionate mental exaltation. The picture of Sisera's death is drawn with startling vividness. On the back ground of a divine enthusiasm, there rises an ecstatic delight in the deed of one woman, and in the misery of another, such as springs up in none but a woman's heart. That which in heathen female characters becomes demoniac in its nature, is in Deborah purified by the divine thoughts which animate her. No subjective interest, no private feeling, no personal passion, influences her; the highest interests of her God and people fill her soul. It is not *her* triumph, but that of her ever-living Maker, that she celebrates; and yet at the height of its exultation her Song breaks out in a mood by which the woman might be recognized, even if neither name nor other information on the authorship had been handed down to us. That which especially gives to the conclusion of the Song its great value and attractiveness, is the fact that from it the genuineness of the whole becomes even more psychologically than grammatically evident—that the mantic power of a prophetic woman, unweakened and in the full glow of its burning ecstasy, is nowhere else filled and controlled as it is here, by rational enthusiasm born of an objective, divinely-given truth. How well it was said of her, that she was a "woman of a fiery spirit" (ch. iv. 4), becomes here most manifest. The more terrible the tyranny, the more commonplace the enemy, the more intensely burns her soul in her song of victory. The glowing heat of her prophetic enthusiasm shines through the irony, with which she places the vain pride of unbelieving enemies over against the almighty power of God. It is not an irony of hatred, disfiguring the face with scornful smiles, but such as springs from the consciousness that God's wisdom and power are superior to all heroes and heathen. Verse 23, pronouncing the ban against Meroz, says, "thus proclaims the messenger of God." The name of God is the source of all power and authority. Apostasy from God incurs the ban; whoever helps to advance his works, is blessed.

Vers. 24, 25. Blessed among women be Jael. Meroz did not come to the help of the people of God. Jael came, though a woman; and not of Israel, but a dweller in tents. The name of her husband is mentioned to distinguish her from others of the same name, and also to give him an interest in the fame of his wife. Accordingly, for her sake, he also has obtained a place in the records of history. The blessing which she enjoys before all women "in the tent," *i. e.* before all who like herself and the Kenites wandered about in tents, after the manner of nomads, she did not win by accident. She made an energetic use of her opportunity. She deceives the flying Sisera by the

signs of homage which she presents to him. He asks only for water; she offers him milk, and, as was fitting with such a guest, בִּסְמֶלֶךְ אֶרֶיכִים, in a bowl such as princes use. She takes the handsome show-bowl, not used on ordinary occasions, and hands him חֶמְצָה. This word, which also signifies butter, expresses in general the more solid forms of milk. Here, where it stands parallel with חֶלֶב, it signifies, in harmony with the "show-bowl," the best milk, the cream. There is absolutely nothing to suggest the opinion of older expositors (Schnurrer, p. 83, received by Herder also) that she wished to intoxicate him with the milk. Moreover, we need not assume that the milk was *camel-milk*: and, at all events, the intoxicating property of that milk<sup>1</sup> must have been known to Sisera. Before Bochart (cf. Serarius, p. 145), Junius and Tremellius had already expressed the opinion, approved by Scaliger, that in סֶפֶל the Latin *simpulum* reappears. But *saph*, *sephel*, are Hebrew forms of a widely-diffused term for round, scooped-out vessels, whether of larger or smaller size, and may be recognized in the Greek σκάφη, bowl, trough, tub, Latin *scaphium*, and in the German *Schaff* (tub, pail), *Scheffel* (*modius*), a round measure.<sup>2</sup> It is true, however, that *sephel* continued to be used among the Jews (in the Talmud) and Syrians, and that the shape of the vessel may be most nearly expressed by *simpulum*, which, as Cicero's proverb, "*fluctus in simpulo*"—a tempest in a nutshell—proves, was a smaller drinking-vessel.

Vers. 26, 27. The first of these verses shows that the narrator in ch. iv. was in possession of traditional information beside that furnished by this Song. The prophetic passes over intermediate, self-evident matters. Sisera, of course, must lie down and sleep, before a woman can approach his head with hammer and nail. The verse depicts the dreadful work and vigor of Jael, as she approaches and drives the nail into Sisera's head.

The terms employed (חֶמְצָה, מַרְזֵה, מַרְזֵה) are such as cause us to hear the blows of the hammer, sounding repeatedly, till she finishes her work. What a terrible picture! Before the warrior stands the kindled woman—the heavy hammer (as Herder finely translated הַלְמִיחָה עֲמָלִים, for עֲמָלִים is one who works hard or heavily, a toiler) in her right hand. The smitten chieftain draws himself together, he seeks to rise, and falls back. Twice more he writhes convulsively, and dies. There he lies, the haughty warrior who thought to destroy the People of God—slain by a woman in disgraceful flight, far from his kindred, alone and unaided, an example to conquerors of human weakness and divine power. (מַרְזֵה is the condition of utter lifelessness, when every sound and motion has ceased; hence it stands in contrast with בָּרָעַ, which describes the wounded man instinctively bending and drawing himself together, as if about to rise.)

<sup>1</sup> [When soured. See Winer's *Realwörterbuch*, i. 648. —**TR.**]

<sup>2</sup> Of two hollow measures, still in use in Damascus, the one is called *mudd*, the other *sumbul*.

Vers. 28-31. But the fall of Sisera in the tent of a woman does not complete the picture of the extraordinary triumph. The prophetess shows yet another view. She carries her hearers to a distant scene. While Sisera lies here in ignominious death, what takes place in the palace of his capital? The return of the chieftain, accustomed to victory, has already been long expected. His mother stands at the window above,<sup>1</sup> in the airy upper room. Her view commands the road to a great distance. She peers and listens; but still the rolling of the victorious chariots is not heard. No triumphal procession, with Sisera at its head, gorgeously attired and proud of victory, lights up the horizon. A sad presentiment steals over her heart: Why does his chariot delay? she cries, wailingly;<sup>2</sup> why does he tarry so long? Is there no car<sup>3</sup> coming, to bring tidings at least? — Who should first suffer anxiety, if not a mother? Of a wife, nothing is said; such love thrives not in the harem of a prince. He is his mother's pride, the great hero, who had hitherto been invincible. What she has in him, and what she loses, concerns no other woman. With this pride, her women, noble ladies, whom her high rank as mother of the all-powerful commander draws around her, comfort her. Victory, they say, has also its occupations. If he has not come yet, it is because these detain him. No other explanation of his non-arrival is possible. Anxiety, therefore, is improper. For it is precisely victory that delays him. This is what her women say to her; the flattered mother admits the justness of their observations, and with them confutes her own foreboding questions.<sup>4</sup> The prophetess, with delicate irony, calls the women who thus counsel, "wise ones." It is the wisdom of a pride that deems it inconceivable that Sisera should not have been victorious; how could he prove unfortunate against this insignificant people! What to them is the God of Israel! It is the *booty* that hinders his coming. Booty, of course, delays the victor; for he must cause it to be divided. The mother and her women naturally think first of the booty; to them, that is the pith of all victories. Their fancy then proceeds to picture at pleasure the conquered treasures. How much time must it take, before every soldier has the two maidens whom he obtains as booty, assigned to him!<sup>5</sup> And then the heap of costly clothing. The purple garments fall naturally to Sisera, for they are suitable only for princes. But each of the others also obtains embroidered garments, always two for each maiden that fell to his share. In this strain they talk with each other, and already imagine themselves to be looking over the goods which Sisera is bringing with him. But all at once the message comes: No booty, no victory — the hero is dead, the army is shattered! All is lost — the castle falls . . .

<sup>1</sup> בעד החלון נשקפה. *invariably expresses the act of looking out from a height, from a mountain, for instance, or from heaven; also from the upper chambers (Gen. xxvi 8), to which persons of quality (Egton, for example) retired to cool themselves.*

<sup>2</sup> ונתִּיב יָבִיב, occurs only in this passage. It is an onomatopoeic word, like the German "*jammern*," [cf. the English "wailing."] In Chaldee, however, it chiefly has the sense of "crying," "sounding," in a favorable as well as unfavorable sense.

<sup>3</sup> פָּנִים פָּעָמִי מִרְקְבוֹתָי. "Why delay" may be used of any kind of repeated motion, like that of treading; and therefore also of the rolling of wheels.

So perish they who set themselves against God. Fearful sorrow breaks their pride. But they who love God conquer. Their type is the sun, who like a fame-crowned victor, every morning, every spring, triumphs gloriously, with hero-like power, over clouds and darkness.

Account must here be given for departures from the ordinary division and translation in ver. 30. That verse, like several others in Deborah's Song, has undergone an incredible amount of conjecture and emendation. It reads as follows: —

1. הָלֹא יִבְצָאָהּ יְחִלְקֶהּ שָׁלָל
2. רַחֵם הַחֲמֻתִּים לְרֹאשׁ בָּבֶר
3. שָׁלָל צָבָעִים לְסִימָהָ
4. שָׁלָל צָבָעִים
5. רַחֲמָהּ צָבָע הַחֲמֻתִּים לְיִנְיָאֶרִי שָׁלָל.

Victors found their greatest satisfaction and joy in the booty. Hence, Moses also makes Pharaoh say (Ex. xv. 9): "I will pursue, I will divide the spoil." The women took for granted that Sisera will find (יִבְצָאָהּ) much booty, and that consequently a division will commence. Lines 2-5 point out the method of the division. First (line 2) each man gets two maidens, or women. Then the garments are divided. But how this was done, depends upon the explanation of line 5, particularly of the words לְיִנְיָאֶרִי שָׁלָל. The difficulty<sup>6</sup> under which expositors labored, originated in their failing to perceive that שָׁלָל means the booty of maidens mentioned in line 2. It cannot be denied that שָׁלָל is booty of persons as well as of things, cf. Num. xxxi. 11. Zech. ii. 13 (9) says, "They become a spoil to those who have served them." In Isa. x. 2, widows are called שָׁלָל, cf. Jer. xxi. 9, as also Jer. l. 10, where the Chaldeans are spoken of as booty. An entirely analogous error need to be made in interpreting the celebrated chorus in the *Antigone* of Sophocles: —

"Ἐρως ἀνίκαιε μάχαν,  
Ἐρως, ὅς ἐν κτήμασι πίπτεις."

the word κτήμασι being understood, not of "the unfree," but always of things (cf. *Weimar. Jahrbuch für Deutsche Lit.*, ii. 359). The "unfree" booty consists of men, animals, and things. So here, שָׁלָל יִנְיָאֶרִי are the necks of the women taken as booty. For each neck two cloths are allowed. Thus the רַחֲמָהּ of line 5 corresponds to the רַחֵם of line 2. The division was thus systematized. As many women as each had,

<sup>4</sup> תַּשִּׁיב אֲנִי. The mother replies herself to her own words, corrects herself. She does not answer the others, — an interpretation neither philologically congruous nor in harmony with the fact that they have not said anything which the mother would wish to refute. Cf. Joh. xxxv. 4, and Prov. xxii. 21.

<sup>5</sup> The following passage from a letter written by the Emperor Claudius 11, after his great victory over the Goths, may serve to confirm our explanation of ver. 30: "*Tantum mulierum cepimus, ut binas et ternas mulieres victor sibi miles possit adijungere.*" Trebellius Pollio, cap. viii.

<sup>6</sup> Observable also in Keil's expositio.

so many times did he receive two cloths (for doubtless the dual form here really signifies the dual number). Now, it must not be overlooked that **רָקִיעַ** is used only in connection with the division of the cloths according to the number of maidens.

Elsewhere also (Ezek. xxvi. 16, excepted) **רָקִיעַ** appears as an article of female adornment, cf. Ps. xiv. 15, for instance; also in Ezek. xvi. 13, the figure is that of a woman. This confirms the above division, and explains the expression of line 3: **שָׁלַל צִבְעִים לְסִסְרָא**. The **צִבְעִים** which the chieftain is to receive, are distinguished

from the **רָקִיעִים**, which fall to the maidens. The latter are beautifully-colored female dress-cloths;<sup>1</sup> the former belong to Sisera, and are therefore to be taken as purple garments. It is true, **צָבַע**, in itself, means only to dip, *i. e.* to dye; but the spirit of the passage invites us to think not of merely colored, but of purple-colored garments, κατ' ἐξοχήν. Such garments were worn by princes in battle (cf. Jndg. viii. 26), and distinguished kings and rulers; by reason of which it was an honor for Mordecai to wear them (Esth. viii. 15; cf. Rosenmüller, *Morgenland*, iii. 37). It is a proud thought for Sisera's mother, that the princely garments belong to her son. The repetition of the words **שָׁלַל צִבְעִים** (line 4) is to be taken as expressive of this her joy. The women do not speak, as has perhaps been supposed, of what they themselves shall receive, but simply represent to themselves how much time must be consumed in dividing so much booty among so many persons, in order to explain that which so greatly needed explanation — the delay of Sisera.

We omit recounting the various different explanations of this section. Nor is room allowed us to notice the manifold endeavors that have been made to analyze the arrangement of the whole Song. Neither Köster's, nor Ewald's, nor Bertheau's division holds good. Le Clerc attempted to arrange the Song according to endings of similar sound, — an attempt that must necessarily fail. On the other hand, alliteration is of such frequent occurrence, as to betray more than anything else the presence of conscious art. Since the Song, however, is not built up of regular strophes, it of course cannot be subject to the same regular laws which govern the Scandinavian poems. But the alliterative form, in its perfect freedom, enhances the power of the Song to an extraordinary degree. It resembles in its effects the pebble-stones of the brook, over which the current flows with augmented force. It would transcend the limits of our present task to institute a comparison between the various productions of the Hebrew muse with reference to this alliterative form. Let it suffice, that in the rendering of the original we have endeavored to give prominence to the delicacy of the alliteration as it appears in this Song of Deborah.

And the land rested forty years. These words do not belong to the Song; but connect themselves with the prose narrative, at ch. iv. 24, into which the poem was inserted.

## HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Deborah, the prophetic Singer. After the victory, Deborah sings a noble song, and thereby enables us to recognize that the spirit which animates her is the spirit of prophecy. The other Judges conquer like herself, but they have left us no songs of victory. But, indeed, they are not said to have been prophets. Only prophetic tongues can sing. True poetry is a sacred art. For that reason, all prophecy is a sublime hymn on judgment and divine redemption. Whatever the prophet sees, he proclaims and sings to the harp of faith. What they believed, that they spake. The wonderful works of God are always spoken of and preached with other tongues and in ecstatic song. Thus, from David's time till now, the church of God has sung. Hallelujah is the key note of all church-hymns.

But, just as Deborah, like Moses and M'riam, sang among the people, so the prophecy of song is not confined within the limits of the church. All popular poetry is the product of popular faith. The decay of literature is bound up in the decay of prophetic inspiration. Rhymes and verbal decorations do not rouse the masses. But when the jubilant heart, redeemed, strikes up its Easter-song, then every pulse will beat responses.

STARKE: Although God has not committed the regular office of preaching to women, he has nevertheless many times imparted his prophetic Spirit to them, and through them has spoken great things. — THE SAME: All who share in the benefits of God, should also join in bringing Him praise and thanksgiving. — GERLACH: An age in which this sublime, high-wrought, and spirited song could be composed, though full of restless and wildly antagonistic movements, was certainly not without deep and living consciousness of the high and glorious calling of the covenant-people.

[WORDSWORTH: We have a song of victory in Exodus; we have a song of victory in Numbers; we have a song of victory in Deuteronomy; we have this song of victory in Judges; we have a song of victory in the first of Samuel; we have a song of victory in the second of Samuel; we have the song of Zacharias, and the Magnificat, or Song of the Blessed Virgin, and the song of Simeon, in the Gospel; and all these songs are preludes to the new song, the song of Moses and of the Lamb, which the Saints of the Church glorified, from all nations, will sing, at the crystal sea, with the harps of God, when all the enemies of Christ and his Church will have been subdued, and their victory will be consummated forever (Rev. xiv. 1-3; xv. 2-4). — THE SAME (on ver. 17): Here, in Dan and Asher, is the second hindrance to zeal for God's cause; the other was that in the case of Reuben — comparative distance from the scene of danger, and rural occupation (see vers. 15, 16). They who live in commercial and maritime cities, engaged in worldly business, are tempted to prefer their own worldly interest to the cause of God and his Church. They who thus act, imitate Dan, and forfeit the blessing of Deborah. They also who live in country villages, removed from the din of controversy, and engaged in farming and other

<sup>1</sup> [This general explanation of **רָקִיעַ**, as cloth or garments "worked in colors," is probably to be preferred to the more definite "embroidered in colors," adopted by Dr. Cassel in his translation of the passage. Keil (on Ex. xxvi. 36) remarks that in the only passage where the verb **רָקַע**

occurs, Ps. cxxxix. 15, it signifies "to weave." Robinson (*Bibl. Repos.*, i. 610) says: "The verb **רָקַע**, both in Hebrew and Arabic, signifies to diversify, make variegated, *sc.* in color; and is not necessarily applied to needlework." Cf. also Bachmann, in *loc.* — Ta.]

rural occupations, have strong temptations to live merely to themselves, and to stand aloof from their brethren, and not to listen to Deborah's voice, and not to flock to Barak's standard, and fight God's battle together with them against the heresy and infidelity which assail his Church. — THE SAME (on ver. 18): Zebulun and Naphtali, in "Galilee of the Gentiles," sent forth champions to the Lord's battle against the enemies of the Hebrew Church; and their land was afterwards honored as the scene of Christ's preaching (see Matt. iv. 13), and gave birth to many of the Apostles, the first champions of the Christian Church against the spiritual Sise-

ras of this world. — THE SAME (on ver. 31): After the stirring emotions of the tempest of the elements, and the rush of the combatants, and the din of arms, and shock of battle, described with wonderful energy in this divine poem, the land had rest; a beautiful contrast, and an emblem of the peaceful calm which will prevail when the storms of this world will be lulled in the Sabbath of Eternity. — HENRY: And well had it been if, when the churches and the tribes had rest, they had been edified, *and had walked in the fear of the Lord.* — Tr.]

## FOURTH SECTION.

THE INCURSIONS AND OPPRESSIONS OF THE MIDIANITES. GIDEON, THE JUDGE WHO REFUSES TO BE KING.

*The Midianites invade the land seven years. Israel cries to Jehovah, and is answered through a prophet, who reminds them of their sins.*

### CHAPTER VI. 1-10.

- 1 And the children [sons] of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord [Jehovah]:
- 2 and the Lord [Jehovah] delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. And the hand of Midian prevailed [was strong] against [over] Israel: *and* because of the Midianites the children [sons] of Israel made them the dens [grottoes] which
- 3 *are* in the mountains, and [the] caves, and [the] strong holds. And *so* it was, when Israel had sown [his fields], that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children [sons] of the east, even they came up against them [and passed
- 4 over them]:<sup>1</sup> And they encamped against [upon] them, and destroyed [ruined] the increase [produce, cf. Deut. xxxii. 22] of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza;
- 5 and left no sustenance<sup>2</sup> for [in] Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers [locusts] for multitude; *for* both they and their camels were without number: and they
- 6 entered into the land to destroy [ruin] it. And Israel was greatly impoverished [reduced] because of the Midianites; and the children [sons] of Israel cried unto the Lord [Jehovah]. And it came to pass, when the children [sons] of Israel
- 7 cried unto the Lord [Jehovah] because of the Midianites, That the Lord [Jehovah] sent a prophet unto the children [sons] of Israel, which [and he] said unto them, Thus saith the Lord [Jehovah, the] God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt [cf. 1 Sam. x. 18] and brought you forth out of the house of bondage [Ex. xiii. 3];
- 9 And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land;
- 10 And I said unto you, I *am* the Lord [Jehovah] your God; fear not [ye shall not fear, *i. e.* reverence] the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.

### TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 3 — וַיָּעָלוּ עָלָיו: literally, "came up upon him," or, "came up against him." Dr. Cassel supplies מֵאֲחֵי אֶרֶץ, and accordingly makes "him" refer to "field." But although this rendering suits the connection admirably well, it cannot be supposed that the Hebrew writer would have left the accusative after עָלָיו unexpressed if he had

intended to refer back to it by means of a pronoun, especially when the latter could so readily be referred to another noun. וְעָלָה עִלּוֹ simply adds the idea of hostility, which the preceding עָלָה left unexpressed. In like manner, עִלְיָהֶם, in the next verse, explains that the "encamping" was "against" Israel — had hostile purposes in view. — Ta.]

[2 Ver. 4. — מִחַיִּים: Dr. Cassel, *Lebensmitteln*, "means of life." So also Keil: "They left no provisions (produce of the field) in Israel, and neither sheep, nor cattle, nor ass." Dr. Cassel, in a foot-note, gives a simple reference to 2 Chron. xiv. 12 (13), where, however, the word unquestionably means anything "alive." Bertheau adopts that meaning here; but cf. ch. xvii. 10. — Ta.]

#### EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL

Ver. 1. And Jehovah delivered them into the hand of Midian. Of the death of Deborah and Barak, no mention is made; the peace which their great deeds procured lasted forty years. But those deeds were already forgotten again; and with them the God whose Spirit had begotten them. Then fresh bondage and misery came, and reminded the people of Him who alone can save. Numerous tribes of eastern nomads invaded, plundered, and devastated the land. The transjordanic tribes could at that time offer them no such resistance as, according to 1 Chron. v. 10, 19, they were able, at a later date, to make against the Hagarites, Jetur, Nephish, and Nodab. The present invaders are called Midian, and appear in league with Amalek and the "sons of the east." The Midianites are wandering tribes in the desert of Sinai, in the neighborhood of the Moabites, answering both in name and manner of life to the Bedouins. In the constantly occurring interchange of מ and ב (*m* and *b*) in the Semitic dialects, the Arabic tongue seems to prefer the ב, while the Hebrew inclines to the מ (cf. Timnath and Tibneh). The Bedouin derives his name from the Arabic *بادية*, the desert; an expression of which the Hebrew בָּדֵד, to be desolate and waste, readily reminds one. The derivation from מִדְבָּר, formerly current, is too artificial, since the prominent idea of the term Bedouin is not a reference to pasture lands, but to the desert. The name Midian manifestly belongs to the same root — מִדְּיָן<sup>1</sup> being the same as

בְּרִי, primitive *Beduwin*, who, like the Towara of the present day (Ritter, xiv. 937), engaged in the carrying trade between the Euphrates and Egypt, and in general pillage. Not all desert tribes boast the same descent, as in fact the Ishmaelites and the Midianites did not belong to the same family; both, however, followed similar modes of life, and hence are sometimes designated by one and the same name (Gen. xxxvii. 25, 28; Judg. viii. 22,

24). They are dwellers in tents, as contrasted with those who till the earth or dwell in cities.

Ver. 2. And the sons of Israel made them the grottoes which are in the mountains, and the caves and the strongholds. The word for grottoes is מִקְדָּרוֹת, and an entirely satisfactory description of them is given by Wetzstein (*Hauran*, p. 45): "At some rocky, elevated, and dry place, a shaft was sunk obliquely into the earth; and at a depth of about twenty-five fathoms, streets were run off, straight, and from six to eight paces wide, in the sides of which the dwellings were excavated. At various points these streets were extended to double their ordinary width, and the roof was pierced with airholes, more or less numerous according to the extent of the place. These airholes are at present called *rösen*, plural *rāwāsin* (windows)." From this may be seen how accurately Raschi and Kimchi explained the above word, when they made it mean "caves with air-holes like windows." The remark of R. Tanchum is likewise correct, that watchmen were employed, who gave alarm signals when the enemy approached. As soon as these were given, the ploughmen and herds hurried quickly into the earth, and were secure. Commonly, says Wetzstein, these excavations had a second place of exit; and consequently, in a region whose inhabitants are liable to constant attacks from the desert (he speaks of the Hauran), are regarded as strongholds. Quite appropriate, apparently, is the rendering of that Greek version which translates מִקְדָּרוֹת by *μάγδρα*, an inclosed space, a fold, stable. In later times, eastern monks, who lived in such grottoes, called the cloister itself *μάγδρα*.<sup>2</sup>

Vers. 3, 4. Till thou come unto Gaza.<sup>3</sup> They were expeditions for plunder and devastation, such as the Bedouin tribes of the present day are still accustomed to undertake against hostile communities.<sup>4</sup> Their general direction was towards the plain. The invaders, however, did not content themselves with ruining the growing crops from east to west, but also scoured the land towards the south. Gaza, moreover, formerly as in later times, was the great bazaar of stolen wares, brought to-

<sup>1</sup> A *Madian* near the Arabian Gulf is mentioned by Abulfeda; cf. *Geogr.*, ed. Paris, p. 86; Arnold, in *Herzog's Realencykl.*, i. 463.

<sup>2</sup> KEIL: "The power of the Midianites and their confederates bore so heavily on the Israelites, that these 'made for themselves the clefts which are in the mountains, and the caves, and the strongholds,' those, namely, which were afterwards (at the time when our Book was written) everywhere to be found in the land, and in times of war offered secure places of refuge. This is indicated by the definite

article before מִקְדָּרוֹת and the other substantives. The words, 'they made for themselves,' are not at variance with the fact that in the limestone mountains of Palestine there exist many natural caves. For, on the one hand, they do not affirm that all the caves found in the land were

made at that time by the Israelites, nor on the other does

עָשׂוּ, to make, exclude the use of natural caves for purposes of safety, since it applies not only to the digging and laying out of new caves, but also to the fitting up of natural ones. . . . For the rest, these clefts, caves, and strongholds, were to serve, not merely as hiding-places for the fugitive Israelites, but much more as places of concealment and security for their property and the necessities of life. For the Midianites, like genuine Bedouins, were more intent on plunder and pillage, and the desolation of the country, than on the destruction of the people." — Ta.]

<sup>3</sup> On Gaza, cf. the Com. on ch. xvi. 1.

<sup>4</sup> [See Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, ii. 163; Kitto *Daily Bible Illustrations*, *Moses and the Judges*, p. 340, etc. — Ta.]

gether there by the Bedouins from their expeditions (Ritter, xiv. 924).<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 5. **As locusts** (Sept. *ἕκπτις*, cf. *Il.* xxi. 12) **for multitude**: a comparison suggestive both of their numbers and of the effects of their presence. The Midianite devastation was like that by locusts. In Hauran, says Wetzstein, various plagues are found; the locust is bad, but the worst are the Bedouins (p. 43). A Bedouin said to him: "The *Ruwala* have become like the hosts of God," i. e., numerous as the locusts, for these are called *Gunud Allah* (Hauran, p. 138). — **Camels without number**. In such extravagant hyperbolisms the speech of Orientals has always abounded. When Burckhardt asked a Bedouin, who belonged to a tribe of three hundred tents, how many brothers he had, throwing a handful of sand into the air, he replied, "equally numberless." The invaders' object was not to gather the harvest, but only to destroy. What they needed, they had with them—cattle, tents, and camels.

Vers. 6-10. **And the sons of Israel cried unto Jehovah**. When the people were brought low (עָנָה) they repented. Distress teaches prayer. With Israel repentance went hand in hand with the remembrance of their former strength. They lose themselves when they lose their God; they find themselves when they turn to Him. This the prophet sets before them. The words put into the mouth of the unknown preacher, reproduce the old penitential discourse. In various but similar forms that discourse ever reappears; for it rests on Mosaic warnings and declarations whose truth all the fortunes of Israel confirm. For the first time, however, the verb נָחַם, to fear, elsewhere used only with reference to God, is here connected with heathen gods; but only to point out the fact that disobedient Israel has yielded to idol gods the reverence which it owed to the eternal God. When such rebukes are gladly heard by the people, deliverance is near at hand. When they believe themselves to have deserved such admonitions and punishments, they again believe God. In accepting the Judge, we secure the deliverer. Such is the historical experience of all ages.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Israel had again apostatized, notwithstanding

<sup>1</sup> [BERTHEAU: "Since the expeditions of eastern tribes follow the same plan at every repetition, and since, according to ver. 33, they encamped in the valley of Jezreel, and moreover made their incursion with their herds and camels, it is evident that they must have entered the country by the one great connecting road between the East and Pales-

the victory and the song of Deborah. **SAILER** "When one has drunk, he turns his back upon the fountain; but it is only the ingrate who does this." Israel was altogether as it had been formerly, but God's judgment assumes a new form. Greater than ever was the humiliation. Israel was not simply oppressed by a tyranny like that of Sisera, who was in the land, but it was like a slave who toils for a foreign master. Had it accomplished its task? Midian came and seized the fruit. So he who falls away from God who gives, must for that very reason serve sin, which takes. — **STARKE**: The strongest fortress, defense, and weapon, with which in danger we can protect ourselves, is prayer.

[**BR. HALL**: During the former tyranny, Deborah was permitted to judge Israel under a palm-tree; under this, not so much as private habitations will be allowed to Israel. Then, the sear of judgment was in sight of the sun; now, their very dwellings must be secret under the earth. They that rejected the protection of God, are glad to seek to the mountains for shelter; and as they had savagely abused themselves, so they are fain to creep into dens and caves of the rocks, like wild creatures, for safeguard. God had sown spiritual seed amongst them, and they suffered their heathenish neighbors to pull it up by the roots; and now, no sooner can they sow their material seed, but Midianites and Amalekites are ready by force to destroy it. As they inwardly dealt with God, so God deals outwardly by them; their eyes may tell them what their souls have done; yet that God whose mercy is above the worst of our sin, sends first his prophet with a message of reproof, and then his angel with a message of deliverance. The Israelites had smarted enough with their servitude, yet God sends them a sharp rebuke. It is a good sign when God chides us; his round repressions are ever gracious forerunners of mercy; whereas, his silent connivance at the wicked argues deep and secret displeasure; the prophet made way for the angel, reproof for deliverance, humiliation for comfort. — **HENRY**: Sin dispirits men, and makes them sneak into dens and caves. The day will come, when chief captains and mighty men will call in vain to rocks and mountains to hide them. — **TR.**]

tine, which crosses the depression of the Jordan near Bethshean, and issues into the plain of Jezreel. The extension of their inroads thence, is indicated by the fact that Gaza, at the southwestern extremity of the land, is named as the limit of their advance." Cf. **Dr. Cassel's** remarks on ver. 11, p. 111. — **TR.**]

*The Angel of Jehovah appears to Gideon, and commissions him to deliver Israel.*

#### CHAPTER VI. 11-24.

11 And there came an angel of the Lord [Jehovah], and sat under an [the] oak which *was* [is] in Ophrah, that *pertained* unto Joash the Abi-ezrite: and his son Gideon threshed [was threshing]<sup>1</sup> wheat by [in] the wine-press, to hide it from the 12 Midianites. And the angel of the Lord [Jehovah] appeared unto him, and said unto him. The Lord [Jehovah] *is* with thee, thou mighty man of valour [valiant 13 hero]. And Gideon said unto him, O [Pray.] my Lord, if the Lord [Jehovah] be



- with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where *be* all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord [Jehovah] bring us up from Egypt: but now the Lord [Jehovah] hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of
- 14 the Midianites. And the Lord [Jehovah] looked upon [turned towards] him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save [and save thou] Israel from the
- 15 hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? And he said unto him, O [Pray,] my Lord,<sup>2</sup> wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family *is* poor [the most insignificant] in Manasseh, and I *am* the least [youngest] in my father's house.
- 16 And the Lord [Jehovah] said unto him, Surely [Nay, but] I will be with thee, and
- 17 thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man. And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that [it is] thou [who] talkest with
- 18 me. Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come [again] unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set *it* before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again.
- 19 And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a [the] basket, and he put *the* broth in a [the] pot, and
- 20 brought *it* out unto him under the oak, and presented *it*. And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay *them* upon this
- 21 [that] rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so. Then [And] the angel of the Lord [Jehovah] put forth the end of the staff that *was* in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then [And] the angel of the Lord
- 22 [Jehovah] departed [disappeared] out of his sight. And when [omit: when] Gideon perceived that he *was* an angel of the Lord [Jehovah, and] Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God [Jehovah]! for because<sup>3</sup> I have seen an angel of the Lord [Jehovah]
- 23 face to face. And the Lord [Jehovah] said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear
- 24 not: thou shalt not die. Then [And] Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord [Jehovah], and called it Jehovah-shalom [Jehovah (is) Peace]: unto this day it *is* yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 11. — Literally, "was beating" (חָבַט) *sc.* with a stick, *παθίζεν*. The more usual word for threshing is דָּרַשׁ. Threshing was generally done by treading with oxen, or by means of a drag-like machine drawn over the grain by oxen or other animals. But for small quantities, and for certain minor seeds (Isa. xxviii. 27), a stick was used, *cf.* Ruth ii. 17 — Ta.]

[2 Ver. 15. — אֲדֹנָי: thus pointed, this word always refers to God, and the possessive suffix (for such אֲדֹנָי is most probably) is lost sight of. "From the words in ver. 15 Gideon perceived that he who talked with him was not a mere man. Hence, he now no longer says: 'Pray, my lord' (אֲדֹנָי, ver. 13), but, 'Pray, Lord' (אֲדֹנָי, God the Lord)." So Keil. Dr. Cassel apparently points the text here as in ver. 13, for he translates "My Lord." Compare what he says on ver. 17. — Ta.]

[3 Ver. 22 — כִּי־עַל־כֵּן: "for therefore," "for on this account." Dr. Cassel renders it here by *also*, "so then" (illative). But the phrase regularly indicates the ground or reason for what goes before, *cf.* Gen. xviii. 5; xix. 8; xxxiii. 10; etc.; and Ewald, *Gram* 353 a. Gideon's thought is: "Woe is me! for therefore — *scil.* to give me cause for my apprehension of danger — have I seen," etc. *Cf.* Bertheau and Keil. The E. V. would be rendered accurate enough by striking out either "for" or "because." — Ta.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 11. In Ophrah. The place is expressly designated as belonging to the family of Abiezer, to distinguish it from another Ophrah in Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 23). Abiezer was a son of Manasseh, whose seats were on this side the Jordan (Josh. xvii. 2). To the western half tribe of Manasseh, belonged also Beth-shean (Seythopolis), Jibleam, Taanach, Megiddo, the fertile districts of the plain of Jezreel. Manasseh therefore suffered especially, when the Midianites crossed the Jordan near Beisan, in order to desolate the land. From vers. 33-35 it may be inferred that Ophrah was situated in the northwestern part of the plain, in the direction of Dora, which likewise belongs to

Manasseh. Since the enemy, after crossing the Jordan, encamped in Jezreel, and Gideon invoked assistance against them from Asher, Naphtali, and Zebulun, this inference may be considered tolerably certain. That Asher was called on, shows that Ophrah was in the West, and the appeal to Naphtali and Zebulun indicates that it lay to the north; since otherwise the army of Midian would have prevented a junction. Ophrah was inhabited by a branch of the family of Abiezer, at whose head Joash stood; but among them dwelt others (אֲנָשֵׁי הָעִיר, "the men of the city," ver. 27), who were probably of the original inhabitants whom Manasseh had suffered to remain.

Under the oak, תַּחַת הָאֵלֶּה. Septuagint

*terebinthos* (interchangeable with *τερέβινθος*), the terebinth. The Targums have *בֹּטְמִין*, oak.

*אֵלֶּה* and *אֲלֵנוּ* are evidently different species of the same stately tree, and probably differ from each other as the *quercus* and *ilex*. The oak and terebinth are too little alike to make it probable that they had almost the same name. *Ilex* is clearly a cognate term. Böttiger's remarks about an "ancestral terebinth," and a "sacred tree" under which "Jehovah appears" (*Baumkultus der Hebräer*, p. 521), have no support in the passages in which those trees are mentioned. The magnificent tree afforded a grateful shade, and therefore invited persons to sit and rest beneath it. Whoever knows the East, knows also how to estimate the value of shade;<sup>1</sup> though indeed everywhere a large tree near a homestead or in a village, becomes the meeting and resting-place of the inhabitants as well as the traveller. Besides, the tree in Ophrah has nothing whatever to do with what farther happens. The whole section in Böttiger's book is a misunderstanding. The tree is mentioned here only to make it appear natural that a stranger could seat himself under it without drawing special attention and exciting surprise.

And his son Gideon was threshing wheat in the wine-press. In German, also, "wine-press" (*Kelter*) sometimes stands for the place in which the pressing is done, as well as for the vat into which the wine flows. The same is the case in Hebrew. While *בֵּית* is the press-house or place,

*בֵּית* stands for the vat; but they are frequently interchanged. Here it is of course the place, of which Gideon makes use to thresh wheat; threshing on exposed threshing-floors being avoided on account of the pillaging propensities of the Midianites. Here that had again come to pass which Deborah lamented, and the cure of which she had celebrated in her song — there was no *בֵּית*, no open country, in the land.

Vers. 12, 13. And the Angel of Jehovah appeared unto him. Hitherto *מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה* always signified a human messenger of God (cf. ch. ii. 1; v. 23). Here it is otherwise. The mention of a "prophet of Jehovah" in ver. 8, already indicated that the *מַלְאָךְ* now spoken of, is not a human messenger. That hint is now rendered plain and unmistakable by the phrase *וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו*, there "appeared" to him, which is only used when the invisible divine nature becomes visible. As Gideon looked up, a stranger stood before him, — who, while exhibiting nothing unusual in his outward appearance, must yet have had about him that which commanded reverence. This stranger greeted him.

Jehovah (is) with thee, thou valiant hero. Gideon cannot have referred this greeting merely to heroic deeds of war. It is much rather the evident pleasure of the stranger in the nervous energy and vigor with which he threshes, to which with a sense of shame he replies. True, indeed, he is conscious of strength and energy; but of what avail are they? Is it not matter of shame that he cannot even thresh his wheat on the threshing-floor? Hence his respectfully spoken answer: No, my lord; God is not with me; for were He with

us, would such things come upon us? would I be driven to thresh wheat in the wine-press? But this answer shows that he believed God; from the

greeting (*וַיֵּרָא*) he had perceived that he stood in the presence of one of the friends and confessors of God. It shows, also, that his courageous heart had long demurred against Israel's dishonor. The national tradition of Israel's ancient glory was not yet extinct. The deliverance from Egypt was the beginning of Israel's nationality and freedom. Doubtless, says the strong man, then, as our fathers tell us, God was with Israel, and freed us from Egypt; but now — we are unable to defend ourselves against the pillaging Bedouins! The doubt which he thus utters, does not spring from an unbelieving and pusillanimous soul. He gladly believed and delighted in what was told of other days. His lament is that of a patriot, not of a traitor. Because such is his character, he has been found eligible to become the deliverer of Israel. The Angel therefore comes to him, and says: —

Vers. 14–16. Go thou in this thy strength<sup>2</sup> . . . do not I send thee? The difference between Gideon's call and that of former heroes, must be carefully observed. Of Othniel it is said, that the "Spirit of Jehovah" was with him; Ehud is "raised up" to be "a deliverer;" Barak is called through the prophets. The latter hero does not immediately proceed to victory. He refuses to go, unless Deborah go with him. In Gideon's case much more is done. An angel of God assumes the human form in order to call him. He condescends to work miracles before him. How much more, apparently, than Deborah had to contend with, must here be overcome by the angel! The grounds of this difference have been profoundly indicated in the preceding narrative. What was the all-important qualification demanded of one who should be a deliverer of Israel? *Decided and undivided faith in God.* Faith in God was the root of national freedom in Israel. Whatever energy and enthusiasm the love of country called out among the Greeks and Romans; that, faith in God called out in Israel. Israel existed in God, or not at all. The hero, therefore, who would fight for Israel, must thoroughly believe in God. This faith, undivided, unwavering, not looking to earthly things, and unconcerned about life or danger — a perfect unit with itself in devotion to God, and therefore hostile to the idol gods, the representatives of the enemies — this faith the call must find in him whom it selected for the work of deliverance. The men hitherto called did not come from the same tribes. Othniel was of Judah; Ehud of Benjamin. In these tribes, the worship of the true God was less mixed with that of the false gods, because here the old inhabitants had been obliged to yield. Barak was of Naphtali, where idolatry, though existing in many places along side of the true worship, did certainly not prevail as in Manasseh. Precisely those places which constituted the richest portion of this half tribe, and which consequently suffered most from the inroads of Midian, namely, the cities of the plain, had never, as the narrator expressly recorded, been vacated by the original inhabitants. They had continued to dwell in Beth-shean, Taanach, Megiddo, Jibleam and Dor (ch. i. 27). Here altars of Baal raised themselves everywhere, fully authorized and perfectly unrestrained. Amid such surroundings, the demonstrative 'this' refers to the strength now imparted to him through the divine promise." — Ta.]

<sup>1</sup> Clearly and charmingly apparent in Gen. xviii. 1-4.

<sup>2</sup> [KEL: "In this thy strength, i. e., in the strength which thou now hast, since Jehovah is with thee. The

position of the faithful is a difficult one at all times, but especially in evil days, when Baal seems to triumph. Their hearts become saddened; and the contrast between the former glory, in which they so gladly believe, and the present impotence, unmanly and confuses them. If the modest soul of Gideon is to be prepared for bold hazards in behalf of the truth of God, he must first be fully convinced that God is still what He was anciently in Israel; that He still works wonders, and in them reveals his love for the nation. In his home and in his city he is surrounded by idolatry. He, the youngest, is to assume an attitude of authority towards all. That he may do this boldly and confidently, the heavenly visitant must inspire him with a divine enthusiasm which shall rise superior to the suggestions of common prudence. [The way to this is opened by the promise, "But I will be with thee!" which is at the same time a challenge to test the speaker.—Tr.] The narrative could not, in so few sentences, teach the love of God, which will thus be tested, more beautifully. Gideon is no presumptuous doubter. It is his humility that requires the miracle. He builds no expectations on his personal strength. If God will show that He is truly "with him," he is ready to do everything. He asks much, because he deems himself altogether insufficient.

Ver. 17. Then give me a sign that thou art He who talketh with me. The angel appeared to Gideon as man; or otherwise he could neither have seen him, nor offered him food. His appearance must have been venerable; for Gideon always addresses him deferentially and humbly, with the words *יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי*, "Pray, my lord." Now, when this stranger says, "I send thee—I will be with thee," and that without adding who He is, Gideon could hardly fail to conclude that He who addressed him was a supernatural being; especially as these words were used in answer to his own, "if Jehovah were with us." It is, therefore, very instructive that the doubtful Gideon asks for a sign to know "whether thou art he who speaks with me," *i. e.*, whether thou art one who can say, "I am with thee," and *not* to know "whether thou art God," a thought which he is not yet prepared to entertain.

Vers. 18-20. Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come again unto thee. Gideon is not yet convinced; but nevertheless the word that has been spoken burns within him. The remark in ver. 14, *וַיֵּלֶךְ*, and Jehovah turned towards him," was doubtless intended to intimate that the heavenly visitant turned his face, beaming with the light of holiness, full upon Gideon. Gideon feels the breath of divinity,—but certain he is not. Should the apparition now depart, he would be in twofold dread. He will gladly do whatever is commanded—but, is the commander God? He thinks to solve this question by means of the duties of hospitality which devolve on him. Hence he prays him to remain, until he has entertained him. He is not so poor, but that he can offer a kid and something more to a guest. Flocks of goats still form a considerable part of Palestinian wealth, and find excellent pasturage in the plain of Jezreel. Time permits Gideon to prepare only unleavened

cakes; but the supply is bountiful, for he uses *אֶפְחָה* (*i. e.*, a measure containing about 1994, according to others 1985, or only 1014, Par. cubic inches, cf. Böckh, *Metrologische Untersuchungen*, p. 261) of flour in their preparation. That which appears singular, is the statement that he put the flesh in the basket (*כַּל*). Wherever else this word occurs, it denotes a bread-basket. The explanation is, that Gideon was unwilling to call a servant, and hence used the basket for both bread and meat. He requires, however, a separate "pot" for the broth, which the basket cannot hold. He thinks now that by this meal he will learn to know his guest. Celestials, according to popular belief, took no earthly food. The angel who appears to Manoah, says (ch. xiii. 16): "I will not eat of thy bread." True, of the angels who came to Abraham (Gen. xviii. 8), it is said, "and they did eat;" but the Targum explains, "they seemed to him to eat."<sup>1</sup> This belief has no resemblance to the Homeric conception, according to which the gods though they eat not bread or drink wine (*Iliad*, v. 341), do nevertheless, like mortals, stretch forth their hands after ambrosia and nectar. The angels, like all that is divine in the Bible, have their spiritual abode in heaven, with nothing earthly about them, consequently with no corporeal wants. The explanation of Ps. lxxviii. 25, as if *לֶחֶם מַלְאָכִים* meant bread such as angels feed on, is erroneous (unhappily, it has been again put forth by Böhm, in Herzog's *Realencykl.* iv. 20); the words have long since been properly explained (by Hengstenberg and Delitzsch) of the manna, which came from heaven, *i. e.*, from on high. Hence, as late as the author of Tobias, the angel is made to say (Tob. xii. 19): "I have neither eaten nor drunk, but ye have seen an apparition." Nor did Gideon err in his expectations. His guest does not eat.

In verse 20, *וַיִּלְחַץ הָאֱלֹהִים* once takes the place *וַיִּלְחַץ*; but the rule that in the Book of Judges Jehovah stands regularly for the God of Israel, Elohim for the gods of the heathen, is not thereby destroyed. This is shown by the article prefixed to Elohim. The reason for the interchange in this passage lies in the fact that the nature of the angel, as a divine being, here begins to declare itself. In order to describe the angel who speaks to Gideon as the messenger of that unity from which the multitude of the angels proceeds (hence *וַיִּלְחַץ*), the narrator introduces the term *וַיִּלְחַץ*. He thereby explains how the angel in his individual appearance, can nevertheless contain in himself the power of God. The Angel of Jehovah, he means to say, is none other than an angel of the Elohim; hence, He, the messenger, speaks as Jehovah.

Vers. 21-24. And the Angel of Jehovah put forth the end of his staff. The angel, like a traveller, but also like the prophets, like Moses and Elijah, carried a staff. They also used it, as he does, to work miracles. Among the Greeks likewise, the staff, in the hands of Æsculapius and Hermes, for instance, is the symbol of the divine power to awaken and subdue.<sup>2</sup> The angel touches

<sup>1</sup> The same explanation is adopted by Josephus and Philo, and is not to be rejected as Delitzsch (*Genesis*, p. 383) and others have done. Genesis xviii. to ver. 12 speaks only of "men." But as they only seemed to be men, so they only seemed to eat. The instance of the risen Saviour is

not to be adduced, for angels before Christ were not born like Christ.

<sup>2</sup> On the subversion of the staff as a symbol of blessings into an instrument of sorcery, cf. my *Eddischen Studien* p. 76.

the flesh and bread, and they ascend in fire. What was brought as a gift to the guest, is accepted by fire as a sacrifice. Fire is the element in which divine power and grace reveal themselves. A flame of fire passed between the parts of Abraham's sacrifice (Gen. xv. 17). Fire came down on the offerings of Solomon, when he had made an end of praying, and consumed them (2 Chron. vii. 1). Fire fell from heaven in answer to Elijah's prayer that the Lord would make it manifest that He was God in Israel, and consumed the sacrifice before the eyes of the rebellious people (1 Kgs. xviii. 38). To give a similar sign, the angel now touched the flesh and cakes. By the fire which blazed up, and by the disappearance of his visitor, Gideon perceived that his guest was actually a celestial being, who had called down fire from above. He was perfectly convinced. No doubt could any longer maintain itself, and in place of it fear seized upon him.

And Gideon said, Ah Lord Jehovah! Gideon makes this exclamation, because, like Manoah (ch. xiii. 22), he thinks that he must die; for he has seen what ordinarily no living man does see. This view is deeply rooted in the Israelitish idea of God, and directly opposed to Hellenic conceptions. In fact, heathenism, as pantheism, knows of no real partition-wall between the individual gods and men (cf. Nägelsbach, *Homer. Theologie*, p. 141); but between the God who inhabits the invisible and eternal, and man who dwells in the world of sense, there was seen to be an absolute difference. Every human being is too sinful, and too much under the dominion of sense, to endure the immediate glory of the Incomprehensible. He cannot see God, to whom "to see" means to receive the light of the sun into eyes of flesh. When, therefore, Moses, notwithstanding that he spake with God, as friend converses with friend (Ex. xxxiii. 11), would see his glory, the answer was (ver. 20): "Thou canst not see my face; for no man sees me, and continues to live." It is implied in this idea, that only the living man cannot see God, that to see Him is to die. That, therefore, the dead can see Him, is an inference close at hand, and important for the O. T. doctrine concerning the soul and immortality.—Gideon, however, has no cause for lamentation, for after all he has only seen the *man*. Jacob's life also was preserved, for his wrestling had been with "the man" (Gen. xxxii. 24, 31 (30)). "No man hath seen God at any time" (John i. 18). When, therefore, Philip says, "Show us the Father," Jesus answers: "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 9). Hence, a voice is heard—the voice of the now unseen God—saying: "Fear not; thou shalt not die!" It was for the very purpose that Gideon might live, that the angel had not appeared as God. The wife of Manoah wisely draws this same conclusion herself (ch. xiii. 23). And God speaks "Peace" to him. Where peace is, there is no occasion for fear; for peace is the fruit of reconciliation. The divine messenger did not come to punish Israel still further, but to bring them help. When He comes to save, He must have previously forgiven. This forgiveness is the "peace." So Gideon understands it, when he builds an altar, and calls it *יְהוָה שָׁלוֹם*, God-Peace, i. e., the Peace of God. Humility and

penitence prompt him to this. Above, in ver. 13, when he was not yet certain that God had appeared to him, he had said nothing to indicate that it was Israel's own fault that God was not with them. Of this he becomes conscious while standing in the presence of the divine messenger. The fear that to see God involves death, rests first of all on the moral ground of conscious sinfulness. Undoubting faith is ever followed by true repentance, namely, love for truth. Gideon builds his altar to the Peace of God, i. e., to his own reconciliation with God, and salvation from the judgment of God.<sup>1</sup> The narrator seizes on this penitential feeling of Gideon's, to which he joyfully consecrated his altar, and by means of it continues the thread of his story. The altar was known to the author as still extant in his time.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Israel repented, and God's compassion renewed itself. Manifold as nature is the help of God. It is not confined to one method; but its wonders become greater as Israel's bondage becomes more abject. It was a great thing to select a woman to be the deliverer of Israel. This woman, however, had grown up in the Spirit of Jehovah; she was a prophetess already, accustomed to counsel the people. The choice of Gideon was therefore still more extraordinary. He was not only the youngest in the least family, but he belonged to a city in which the heathen had for the most part remained. Idolatry prevailed, invading even his father's house. God took him like a brand from the fire, to make him the deliverer of his people.

So God converted his Apostle, from amidst the multitude of enemies and their plots, on the way to Damascus. So Luther went forth from his cloister to preach the gospel of freedom. God calls whoever He will, and no school, faculty, or coterie, limits the field of his election.

STARKE: When we think that God is farthest from us, that in displeasure He has entirely left us, then with his grace and almighty help He is nearest to us.—THE SAME: Even in solitude the pious Christian is not alone, for God is always near him.

God does not err in his calling. Gideon was the right man, though he himself did not believe it. He desires a sign, not from unbelief, but humility. He who thus desires a miracle, believes in miracles. He desires it not to be a proof of God, but of himself. To him the censure of Jesus does not apply: "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe;" for those wished them as grounds of faith in Jesus, Gideon as evidence that himself was the right man. Gideon's humility was evidence of his strength.—HEDINGER: Conceit and pride do not lead man to God, but humility and lowliness do.

Thus Gideon believed the angel whom he beheld vanishing toward heaven; and the Jews did not believe Jesus, when He wrought miracles and rose from the dead. But Gideon's eye was the humility with which he looked at himself. When Christians do not believe, it is because of pride which does not see itself. It is not for want of a theophany that many do not believe; for all have seen angels, if their heart be with God. "For the angel of the

<sup>1</sup> [KEIL: "The design of this altar . . . is indicated by the name given to it. It was not to serve for sacrifices, but as a memorial and witness of the theophany vouchsafed to Gideon, and of his experience that Jehovah

is Peace, i. e., does not desire to destroy Israel in his wrath but cherishes thoughts of peace." Cf. Hengstenberg. *Diss. on Pent. ii. p. 34.*—Tr.]

Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them" (Ps. xxxiv. 8).

STARKE: Even the strongest faith has always something of weakness in it. — LISCO: From ver. 14 Gideon seems already to have perceived who it was that spake with him. His answer is the language not so much of unbelief as of modesty. — GERLACH: His prayer was not dictated by unbelief, but by a childlike, reverential acknowledgment of the weakness of his faith, as in the case of Abraham.

[BP. HALL (ver. 11): What shifts nature will make to live! O that we could be so careful to lay up spiritual food for our souls, out of the reach of those spiritual Midianites! we could not

but live in despite of all adversaries. — THE SAME (ver. 13): The valiant man was here weak, weak in faith, weak in discourse, whilst he argues God's absence by affliction, his presence by deliverances, and the unlikelihood of success by his own inability — all gross inconsequences. — SCOTT: Talents suited for peculiar services may for a time be buried in obscurity; but in due season the Lord will take the candle from "under the bushel," and place it "on a candlestick," to give light to all around; and that time must be waited for, by those who feel their hearts glow with desires of usefulness which at present they have no opportunity of executing. — TR.]

*Gideon destroys the altar of Baal, and builds one to Jehovah. His father, Joash, defends him against the idolaters. His new name, Jerubbaal.*

#### CHAPTER VI. 25-32.

- 25 And it came to pass the same [that] night, that the Lord [Jehovah] said unto him, Take thy father's young [ox] bullock, even [and]<sup>1</sup> the second bullock of seven years old, and throw [pull] down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and
- 26 cut down the grove [Asherah] that is by [upon] it: And build an altar unto the Lord [Jehovah] thy God upon the top of this rock [fortification], in the ordered place,<sup>2</sup> and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt-sacrifice with the wood of the
- 27 grove [Asherah] which thou shalt cut down. Then [And] Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the Lord [Jehovah] had said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could
- 28 not do it by day, that he did it by night.<sup>3</sup> And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove [Asherah] was cut down that was by [upon] it, and the second bullock was offered
- 29 upon the altar that was built. And they said one to another, who hath done this thing? And when [omit: when] they inquired and asked [searched], [and] they
- 30 said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing. Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove [Asherah] that was by
- 31 [upon] it. And Joash said unto all that stood against [about] him, Will ye plead [contend] for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead [contendeth] for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning;<sup>4</sup> if he be a god, let him plead [con-
- 32 tend] for himself, because one [he] hath cast down his altar. Therefore on that day he [they] called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead [contend] against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.

#### TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 25. — Bertheau and Wordsworth also find *two* bullocks in the text. "The original text," says the latter, "seems clearly to speak of two bullocks, and the ancient versions appear to distinguish them (see *Sept.*, *Vulg.*, *Syriac*, *Arabic*)." De Wette and Bunsen, too, render "and," not "even." Keil argues, that "if God had commanded Gideon to take two bullocks, He would surely also have told him what he was to do with both." But does He not tell him plainly enough in the words, "and pull down the altar of Baal?" See the commentary, below. — TR.]

[2 Ver. 26. —  $\text{וְעָלָה עָלָיו עֵצִים}$ . Our author's translation of this word, "on the forward edge," is too precarious to allow of its introduction into the text. It probably means: "with the arrangement of wood" (cf. below). On the use of  $\text{עָלָה}$  in this sense, see Ges. *Lx.*, s. v., B. 2, a. — TR.]

[3 Ver. 27. — The E. V. is singularly awkward here. Dr. Cassel: "and as, on account of the house of his father and the men of the city, he feared to do it by day, he did it by night." — TR.]

[4 Ver. 31. — Dr. Cassel translates the foregoing clause thus: "he that contendeth for him, let him die! Wait till morning;" etc. Keil interprets similarly. — TR.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 25. And it came to pass that night. "Ye have honored false gods instead of the eternal God," the prophet had said above, "and therefore are come under the yoke." For apart from its God, the maintenance of Israel's nationality is an unnecessary thing. If they attach themselves to the gods of the nations, they must also wear their fetters. Only when they believe the Eternal is freedom either necessary or possible. The war against the oppressors, must begin against the gods of the oppressors. Gideon, fully convinced of the truth of Israel's God, cannot summon to battle against the enemy, while an altar of Baal stands in his father's own village. Israel's watchword in every contest is, "God with us;" but before that word can kindle the hearts of the people, it must have been preceded by another — "Down with Baal!" This truth God himself enunciates in the valiant soul of Gideon. For now, being wholly filled with divine fire, he will delay no longer. But, only he who fears not Baal will find confidence among the people. The vigorous blows of his axe against the Asherah are the clearest proofs of his own faith. Such a faith kindles faith. Accordingly, Gideon must begin the liberation of Israel in his own house. Whoever will be truly free, must commence with himself and by his own fire-side — that is truth for all ages.

Take the ox-bullock, etc. Under divine inspiration, Gideon is as energetic as he is prudent. He neither delays, nor hastens overmuch. He chooses night for what he has to do, not from cowardice, but to insure a successful issue. By day, an outcry and contest would be inevitable, and would terrify the undecided. An accomplished fact makes an impression, and gives courage. His task is a twofold one: he must first tear down, then build up. The abominations of Baal must be thrown down. The altars of Baal, as the superior sun-god, were located on heights or elevated situations. They were built of stone, sometimes also of wood or earth (2 Kgs. xxiii. 15), and were of considerable massiveness. Erected upon them, "planted" (לִצַּבֵּץ, Deut. xvi. 21), stood a tree, or trunk of a tree, covered with all manner of symbols. This was consecrated to Astarte, the fruitful, subordinate night-goddess. Such an image was that of Artemis in Ephesus, black (like the earth), fastened to the ground, and full about the breasts, to symbolize the fostering love of the earth. In other places, where the Greeks met with similar figures, Sparta, Byzantium, and elsewhere (cf. Gerhard, *Griech. Mythol.* § 332. 4, vol. i. p. 343), they were dedicated to Artemis Orthia, or Orthosia. In this name (ὄρθος, straight), that of the Asherah (from אֲשֵׁרָה, to be straight) was long since recognized (cf. Zorn, *Biblioth. Antiquar.*, p. 383). Asherah was the straight and erect idol of Astarte; the symbol of her sensual attributes. Its phallic character made it the object of utter abhorrence and detestation to the pure and chaste worship of Jehovah. And in truth the worship at Sparta (Paus. iii. 16, 7) did not differ essentially from that on Mt. Carmel (1 Kgs. xviii. 28). This idol was a common ornament of the altars of Baal,<sup>1</sup>

by means of which these represented the worship of nature in its completeness. Hence it is, that we find Baal and Astarte joined together, as well as Baal and Asherah. Accordingly, Asherah and Astarte are not indeed altogether identical, as was formerly supposed; but neither are they, as Movers thought (*Phoeniz.* i. 561, etc.), different divinities. Asherah was the Astarte Orthia, the image which expressed the ideas represented by the goddess; but it was not, and need not be, the only image of the goddess. Without adducing here the many passages of Scripture in which Asherah and Astarte occur, the foregoing observations may suffice to explain every one of them. It will be found, upon reviewing them, that while persons could indeed worship Astarte, it was only Asherah which they could make for themselves, and again destroy. In form and idea, Baal and Astarte presented the perfect contrast to the living and creative God. Gideon, therefore, if he is to build up Israel anew, must begin with the overthrow of their idols. But this was not so slight an undertaking as to be within his own sole powers of execution. He needs men and carts for the purpose. He must wrench the altar of Baal out of its grooves, and throw it down; tear out the Asherah, and cut it to pieces. In their place (this is expressed by the הָרָהֹק, "this," of ver. 26), he is to erect an altar to the Eternal God. For this he cannot use the polluted fragments of the altar of Baal. He must bring pure earth and stones with him, out of which to construct it. Hence he uses ten servants to assist him, and a cart.

Take the ox-bullock which belongs to thy father, etc. The altar of Baal had been erected on his father's estate. The guilt of his father's house must be first atoned for. Therefore his cattle are to be taken. פֶּרֶן הַבָּשָׂר, ox-bullock, is not a young bullock, and does not answer to הַבָּשָׂר. It is rather the first bullock of the herd, the "leader;" for even the second, being seven years old, is no longer young. Hesiod advises agriculturists to provide themselves two plough-bullocks of nine years old (*Works and Days*, 447). In Homer, bullocks of five years are offered and slaughtered (*Il.* ii. 403; *Odys.* xix. 420). Down to the present day, the bullock of the plain of Jezreel and the Kishon surpasses, in size and strength, the same animal in the southern parts of the land (cf. Ritter, xvi. 703). This first bullock, this head of the herd, answers in a sense to the head of the family, which is Joash; it must help to destroy the altar which belongs to the latter. But as Gideon is not simply to destroy, but also to build up, the second bullock must also be taken, to be offered upon the new altar, in a fire made of the wood of the Asherah. The flames for which the idol must furnish the material — and we may thence infer how considerable a log of wood it was, — must serve to present an offering to the Eternal God.<sup>2</sup>

Vers. 26-29. On the top of the fortification, on the forward edge, עַל רֹאשׁ הַמְּצִיט, not the rock, near which God first appeared to Gideon. It was stated at the outset, that Israel made themselves grottoes, caves, and fortifications against the

<sup>1</sup> הָאֲשֵׁרָה אֲשֶׁר עָלָיו. Hence they always occur together, cf. 1 Kgs. xiv. 23; xvi. 33; 2 Kgs. xvii. 16; xxi. 1; xxiii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> [WORDSWORTH: "Gideon, though not a priest, was

made a priest for the occasion — as Manoah afterwards was (ch. xiii. 19) — by the special command of God, who shows his divine independence and sovereign authority by making priests of whom he will, and by ordering altars to be built where he will. Cf. Hengst., *Pentateuch.* ii. 48." — T2 ]

**enemy.** Some such place of protection and defense we are here to understand by the term **מַעֲרָקָה**. Upon this, the altar of Baal, the helper who could not help, had reared itself. In its place, an altar of the true Helper, the Eternal God, was now built, and placed **בְּמַעֲרָקָה**, on the forward edge. This word occurs repeatedly in the first book of Samuel, in the sense of "battle-array." It answers to the Latin *acies*, and indicates that attitude of armies in which they turn their offensive sides toward each other; so that we are told (1 Sam. xvii. 21) that Israel and the Philistines had arranged themselves **מַעֲרָקָה לְקִרְיָתָהּ**. Now, as *acies* came to signify battle-array because of the sharp side which this presented, so **מַעֲרָקָה**, as here used of the fortification, can only signify its forward edge.<sup>1</sup> The place where Gideon had to work was within the jurisdiction of Joash, but at some distance from the city, since otherwise the inhabitants would scarcely have remained ignorant of his proceedings till the next morning.

Ver. 30. **And the men of the city said unto Joash.** Although the altar belonged to Joash, the people of the city nevertheless think themselves entitled to sit in judgment on the insult offered to Baal. Baal worshippers are not tolerant. The disposition of Joash, however, seems even before this to have been similar to that of Gideon. For when it is said that Gideon feared to do his work by day, among all those whom he considers, his father is not mentioned, though he must be the most directly concerned. The same inference may be drawn from the energetic and ironical answer which he gives the men of the city. There is nothing to support Bertheau's conjecture that Joash held the office of a judge. He is the head of the family; as such, he is required to deliver up Gideon, guilty of crime towards Baal. Joash is not merely indisposed to do this, but even threatens to use violence against any one who takes the cause of Baal upon himself. A few such forcible words were enough to quiet the people of the city. Israel had fallen into such deep torpidity and self-oblivion, that their enemies dared to demand of a father the life of his son, because he had done that which it was the duty of every Israelite to do. The first energetic resistance changes the position of parties, and puts the enemy to flight.

Ver. 31. **And Joash said, Will ye contend for Baal?** In a similar manner,<sup>2</sup> Lucian ridicules the heathenism of his day, by representing Jupiter as laughed at for letting the sacriligious thieves depart from Olympia, untouched by his thunderbolts, although they had cut from his statue the golden locks of hairs, each of which weighed six minæ (in *Jupiter Tragoedus*). It lies in the nature

of heathenism to identify God and the symbol which represents Him, since in general whatever testifies of God, every sensible manifestation of Deity, is made Deity itself by it. Joash ridicules the idea of his heathen neighbors, that the destruction of his altar is an insult to Baal. On the principles of heathenism, Baal's protection of his altar or the contrary, will demonstrate whether he is or is not. If he is able to take care of his own altar, Joash mockingly argues, it is an insult for another to undertake it for him. In this case, not he who injures, but he who would defend his altar, denies his deity. The latter first deserves to die. Many expositors have connected **עַד הַבֹּקֶר**, "till morning," with **וְיָמָת**, "let him die," which is against the sense of Joash's speech. As to the destroyer of the altar, he says, we know not yet whether he has deserved death; wait till morning, and let us see whether Baal himself will do anything. But he who would take Baal's place, and put the other to death, he deserves punishment at once; for he denies that Baal has any power at all, and by consequence that he exists. Wait till morning, if he be a god, he will contend for himself, because he hath cast down his altar. Joash denies that the altar belonged to him, although ver. 25 states that it did. The altar, he says, belongs to its god: let him see to it. The result of these words must have been, to make it evident to the men of the city that Joash and his house would have nothing more to do with Baal. For this they knew full well, that their Baal would do nothing to Gideon. It is one of the characteristic illusions of heathenism in all ages, that it does not itself believe in that for which it spends its zeal.

Ver. 32. **And at that time they named him Jerubbaal, that is, Baal will contend with him, for he hath thrown down his altar.** Why expositors have not been content with this significant explanation, it is impossible to see.<sup>3</sup> It sets forth the utter impotence of Baal, and the mockery which it excited. Had Gideon been named "Contender with Baal," it would have implied the existence of Baal. But if he was called, "Baal will contend with him, avenge himself on him," and thus by his life, presence, and prosperity, strikingly manifested the impotence of the idol-god, who could not take vengeance on him, then his name itself was full of the triumph of the Israelitish spirit over its opponents. Baal can do nothing. Baal will do nothing, when his altars are overthrown. Baal is not: Israel has no occasion to fear. The superstition that he will avenge himself on his enemies, is idle. Of that, Jerubbaal affords living proof. In vain did Baal's servants wait for vengeance to overtake Gideon—it came not; the hero only becomes greater and more tri-

1 [Keil. " **בְּמַעֲרָקָה**, 'with the preparation (*Zurüstung*).'] The explanation of this word is doubtful. Since **מַעֲרָקָה** is used (1 Kgs. xv. 22) in **מַעֲרָקָה** of the building material,

Studier and Bertheau understand **מַעֲרָקָה** of the materials of the overthrown Baal-altar, out of which Gideon was to build the altar to Jehovah—Studier applying the word more particularly to the stone of the altar itself. Bertheau to the materials, especially the pieces of wood, lying on the altar, ready to be used in offering sacrifices.

But they are certainly wrong; for neither does **מַעֲרָקָה** mean building material or pieces of wood, nor does the definite article, which here precedes it, point to the altar of Baal. The verb **מַעֲרָקָה** occurs not only quite frequently

of the arrangement of the wood upon the altar (Gen. xxii. 9; Lev. i. 7, and elsewhere), but also of the preparation of the altar for the sacrifice (Num. xxiii. 4). Accordingly,

**מַעֲרָקָה** can scarcely be understood otherwise than of the preparation of the altar to be built for the sacrificial action, in the sense: 'Build the altar with the preparation (equipment) required for the sacrifice.' According to what follows, this preparation consisted in piling up the wood of the Asherah on the altar to consume the burnt-offering of Gideon."—TR.]

2 The same idea underlies the Jewish legends of Abraham's destruction of the idols in his father's house. Cf. Beer, *Leben Abraham's*, Leipzig, 1859. p. 10.

3 Keil has come back to it.



amphant. The name is therefore of greater ethical significance, than has been generally supposed. This fact secured its perpetuation and popular use. Even believers in the eternal God are deeply imbued with superstitious fear of Baal, which forbids them to do anything against him. How idle this fear is, Gideon shows. Samuel in his farewell address speaks of Gideon as Jerubbaal (1 Sam. xii. 11); while Joab, speaking of Abimelech, calls him "son of Jerubbosheth" (2 Sam. xi. 21). בַּנֶּתֶר is a term of reproach for Baal (Hos. ix. 10).<sup>1</sup> Any connection between the name Jerubbaal and that of a god *Jaribolos*, discovered on Palmyrene inscriptions, is not to be thought of. First, for the self-evident reason, that no heathen god can possibly be called Jerubbaal; and secondly, because the like-sounding *Jar* can be better explained from יָרֵךְ, the moon, thus suggesting a moon-baal (cf. *Corpus Insc. Græc.* iii. n. 4502, etc.; Ritter, xvii. 1531, etc.). It is interesting to notice that Gideon's proper name, גִּדְעוֹן, appropriately expresses the act with which he began his career. גִּדְעוֹ is equivalent to the Latin *coedere*, to fell. Deut. vii. 5 says: "Their altars ye shall throw down, . . . their asherahs ye shall fell (גִּדְעוֹן) cf. Deut. xii. 3). The same word is used (2 Chron. xiv. 2; xxxi. 1) of the felling of the Asherah, and Isa. ix. 9, of the felling of trees. Gideon, therefore, is the Feller, *Cæsar* (*Cæsar*).

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

After the miracle of his election, Gideon enters on his calling. Othniel begins his official career in battle, Gideon in his own house. He must test at home his courage against foes abroad. Before he can proclaim the call of God against the enemies of Israel, who are inflicted on account of the prevalent idolatry, he must throw down the altar of Baal in his father's house. The most difficult battle is to be fought first. Nearest neighbors are the worst adversaries. But he dares it because he believes God, and wins. So, when preachers of the gospel reap no fruit and gain no victory, it is often because they have not yet overthrown the altars in their own houses. The road to the hearts of the congregation, is over the ruins of the minister's own Baal.—STARKE: Christian friend, thou hast a Baal in thine own heart, namely, evil concupiscence. Wilt thou please the Lord, first tear that idol down.

But Gideon must not merely tear down, but also build up; not only destroy the old altar, but also sacrifice on the new. Tearing down is of itself no proof of devotion; for an enemy's enemy is not always a friend. The spirit that only denies, is an evil spirit. Divine truth is positive. Building involves confession; hence, to build up (edify) is to proclaim our confession and to preach the gospel of Him who is Yea and Amen. So did the Apostle not merely undermine the idolatry of Diana, but build up the church in Ephesus. Boniface, the Apostle of the Germans, not only cut down the oaks of heathenism, but founded churches. All churches are Gideon-altars, dedicated to Him who overthrew death, that He might build up the New Jerusalem.—STARKE: He who

would truly reform, must not only abolish, but put something better in its place.

Gideon's sacrifice was to be consumed by the wood of the idol-image. The sole use which can be made of wooden gods, is to kindle a sacrifice to the true God. The wood was not unholy, but only the heart that fashioned it into an idol-image. The mountains on which the people worshipped were not unholy, but only the people who erected idols upon them. All sacrificial flames arise from the wood of idols previously worshipped. So the Apostle consumed his zeal as persecutor in the burning zeal of love. When the heart burns with longings after its Saviour, the flames consume the worldly idols which it formerly served. When prayer rises like the smoke of sacrifice, it springs from penitence in which old sins are burned to ashes.

Gideon is obedient to every direction, and is crowned with success. Notwithstanding apparent danger, obedience to God conducts only to happy issues. The most painful injunction is laid on Abraham; he obeys, and it turns to salvation. The enemies seek to slay Gideon; but they are sent home with derision. Gideon not only threw down the altar in his father's house, but also won his father's heart for God. So, confession of Christ often draws after it the hearts of parents. It is salvation, even if the first be last. However late, if at last men only come to God!—LISCO: The father had evidently derived new courage from his son's bold exploit of faith, and declares war to the idolaters, if they touch his son.—GERLACH: The bold deed of the son inspired the father also with new faith and courage. Hence, in this strife, Joash dared to judge as faith demanded.

And Gideon was called Jerubbaal. The hero is the wonderful type of the militant church: militant, that is, against unbelief, not engaged in internal warfare. His name proclaimed that Baal is nothing and can do nothing; but that God's word is irresistible. Hence, it is a symbol of encouragement for all who confess the truth. He who fears and hesitates, does not love; but for him who has courage, Baal is vanquished. Gideon threw down his altar, and built another for God, not for the stones' sake, but for Israel's benefit. Every Christian is a Jerubbaal, so long as instead of self-righteousness, he gives a place in his heart to the Cross. Thus, many in our days, who have more fear of man than courage in God, are put to shame by Jerubbaal. They exercise discretion, regard their position, look to their income, defer to superiors, and wish to please all,—but only he who seeks to please God alone, loses nothing and gains all.—STARKE: As names given to men in memory of their good deeds are an honor to them, so to their adversaries they are a disgrace.—GERLACH: Henceforth the life and well-being of Gideon became an actual proof of the nothingness of idolatry; hence he receives the name Jerubbaal from the mouth of his father.

[BP. HALL: The wood of Baal's grove must be used to burn a sacrifice unto God. When it was once cut down, God's detestation and their danger ceased. The good creatures of God that have been profaned to idolatry, may, in a change of their use, be employed to the holy service of their Maker.—WORDSWORTH: The Parthenons and Pantheons of heathen antiquity have been consecrated into Basilicas and Churches of Christ.—HENRY: Gid-

<sup>1</sup> On the names Ishbosheth and Mephibosheth, compare for the present my article on Ishbosheth in Herzog's *Real-*

*encykl.* vii. 83, where, however, the printer has erroneously put מריב בעל for קרי מבעל.



son, as a type of Christ, must first save his people from their sins, then from their enemies. — THE SAME: It is good to appear for God when we are called to it, though there be few or none to second us, because God can incline the hearts of those to stand by us, from whom we little expect it. — Tr.

*The Midianite marauders being encamped in the Plain of Jezreel, the Spirit of Jehovah takes possession of Gideon. The double sign of the fleece.*

## CHAPTER VI. 33-40.

33 Then [And] all the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the children [sons] of the east were gathered together, and went over, and pitched [encamped] in the valley [plain] of Jezreel. But [And] the Spirit of the Lord [Jehovah] came upon 34 Gideon, and he blew a [the] trumpet; and Abi-ezer was gathered after him. And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh: who also was gathered after him and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.<sup>1</sup> And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel 35 by my hand, as thou hast said, Behold, I will [omit: will] put a fleece of wool in the [threshing] floor: and if the dew [shall] be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth [ground] besides, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by 36 my hand, as thou hast said. And it was so: for [and when] he rose up early on the morrow, and [he] thrust [pressed<sup>2</sup>] the fleece together, and wringed<sup>2</sup> the [omit: 37 the] dew out of the fleece, a [the<sup>3</sup>] bowl-full of water. And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot [kindled] against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove [try], I pray thee, but this once with the fleece: let it now be dry 38 only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. And God did so that night: for [and] it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[<sup>1</sup> Ver. 35. — מִן־הָהָרִים, "to meet them," i. e., Gideon and the Manassites already in the field. Dr. Cassel (De Wette, also) substitutes "him." The LXX. change the number at the other end of the sentence, probably because they thought that the mountaineers of Asher and Naphtali, descending into the plain, did not make a good subject for הָיָא, to go up, and render: καὶ ἀνέβη εἰς συνάντησιν αὐτῶν. As to what may be called the "military" meaning of הָיָא, cf. the Com. on ch. i. 1, p. 26. — Tr.]

[<sup>2</sup> Ver. 38. — The words rendered "thrust together" and "wringed" by the E. V., are נָחַץ (from זָחַץ) and נָחַץ (from נָחַץ). Dr. Cassel translates the first by "wringing," the second by "pressing." The difference between them seems to be slight, if any. In the text, one clause expresses the action, the other the result. The primary idea of זָחַץ, according to Gesenius, is "to straiten, to bring into a narrow compass;" that of נָחַץ, "to suck." The action of wringing, though likely enough to be used by Gideon, is not expressed by either term. However, it lies nearer זָחַץ than נָחַץ. De Wette: *Er druckte die Wolle aus, und presste Thau aus der Schur*, etc. — Tr.]

[<sup>3</sup> Ver. 38. — הַכֵּל, "the bowl," namely, the one he used to receive the water. On the "bowl," compare our author's remarks on ch. v. 25. — Tr.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Vers. 33-35. It was high time that a new spirit stirred itself in Israel. The Bedouin hordes already pressed forward again from the desert regions beyond the Jordan, and were settling down, like a heavy cloud, on the plain of Jezreel. Gideon, by his bold deed against Baal, and because the idol-god did nothing whatever to avenge the insult to its altar, had acquired authority and distinction among his people. As now the enemy

who oppressed and plundered Israel was near, the Spirit of God filled him, literally, "put him on." What he had done against the altar of Baal in his father's house, that he would attempt against the enemy in the open field. He sounds the trumpet on the mountains. Though the youngest in his family, and that the least in Manasseh, the people obeyed his call, and ranged themselves under him (וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ) — such power is there in one courageous deed, in the vigorous resolution of one man in a

servile age. Even Asher, who had held back from Barak, furnished men. Nor were the brave sons of Zebulun and Naphtali wanting on this occasion. In a short time Gideon stood at the head of a not inconsiderable army.

Ver. 36. And Gideon said unto God. The success thus far enjoyed by Gideon, has not lifted him up. He cannot yet believe that he is called to conduct so great an undertaking. He is aware also of the dangers to which he exposes his house and country. True, the divine manifestation which roused his soul, is still acting on him. But time, even a few eventful days, envelops such memories in shadowy dimness. In his humility, he is seized by a longing for renewed certainty. He desires to be assured, whether it was indeed destined for him to become the deliverer. He has recourse to no superstitious use of the lot. He turns in prayer to the God who has already shown his wonders to him, and who, as angel, has conversed with him. Now, as in ver. 20, where the angel manifests his supernatural character, the narrator used Elohim, with the article, because from Jehovah alone, who is the true Elohim, the only one to whom this name justly belongs, angels proceed; so here again, when Gideon asks for a new sign, he makes him pray to "the Elohim," and continues to employ this term as long as he speaks of the miracle.

Vers. 37-40. Behold, I put a fleece of wool in the threshing-floor. The sign he asks for is such as would naturally suggest itself to a person in rural life. The holy land is favored with heavy, fertilizing dews, which impart to its fields that beautiful and juicy verdure, by which it forms so grateful a contrast with the dry and dewless steppes on which nothing but the palm grows (cf. Ritter, xv. 157; xvi. 42, etc. [Gage's Transl. ii. 164]). Wool, spread on the open threshing-floor, especially attracts the dew. Gideon proposes to consider it a divine affirmative sign, if only the wool absorb dew, while the ground around be dry. It takes place. He finds the wool wet; after wringing (נָצַק, from נָצַק = נָצַק) the fleece, and pressing

it (צָקַק, from צָקַק = צָקַק), he can fill a whole bowl full with the water; the ground round about is dry. Though very remarkable, he thinks nevertheless, that it may possibly be explained on natural principles. Perhaps the dew, already dried up from the ground, was only longer retained by the fleece. In his humility and necessity for assurance, and in the purity of his conscience, which is known to God, he ventures once more to appeal to God. If now the reverse were to take place, leaving the wool dry and the ground wet, there could be no doubt that God had wrought a miracle. No other explanation would be possible. This also comes to pass, and Gideon knows now beyond all doubt, that God is with him. The naïveté of an uncommon depth of thought reveals itself in this choice of a sign for which the hero asks. Faith in God's omnipotence lies at its base. Such a request could only be made by one who knew that the whole creation was in the hands of God. Relying on the grace and power of God, he casts lots with the independent laws of nature. The childlike

faith which animates him, sounds the depths of an unfathomable wisdom. Hence, in the ancient church, his miraculous sign became the type of the highest and most wonderful miracle known to the church, the birth of Jesus from the Virgin Mary. Origen already speaks of the advent of the Son of God as the fall of the divine dew. The development of this type in pictures and customs, I have elsewhere attempted to trace, whither I must here refer the reader (*Weihnachten*, p. 248, etc.).

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

GERLACH: Gideon does not "put on" the Spirit of the Lord, but the Spirit puts him on. He clothes him, as with a suit of armor, so that in his strength he becomes invulnerable, invincible.

[Br. HALL: Of all the instruments that God did use in so great a work, I find none so weak as Gideon, who yet of all others was styled valiant. THE SAME: The former miracle was strong enough to carry Gideon through his first exploit of razing the idolatrous grove and altar; but now, when he saw the swarm of the Midianites and Amalekites about his ears, he calls for new aid; and, not trusting to the Abiezrites, and his other thousands of Israel, he runs to God for a further assurance of victory. The refuge was good, but the manner of seeking it savors of distrust. There is nothing more easy than to be valiant when no peril appeareth; but when evils assail us upon equal terms, it is hard, and commendable, not to be dismayed. If God had made that proclamation now, which afterwards was commanded to be made by Gideon, "Let the timorous depart," I doubt whether Israel had not wanted a guide: yet how willing is the Almighty to satisfy our weak desires! What tasks is He content to be set by our infirmity! — KEIL: Gideon's prayer for a sign sprang not from want of faith in God's promise of victory, but from the weakness of the flesh, which paralyzes the faith and energy of the spirit, and often makes the servants of God so anxious and timorous that God must assist them by miracles. Gideon knew himself and his own strength, and that for victory over the enemy this would not suffice. — SCOTT: Even they who have the Spirit of God, and by the trumpet of the gospel call others to the conflict, cannot always keep out disquieting fears, in circumstances of peculiar danger and difficulty. In this struggle against involuntary unbelief, the Lord himself, the Author and Finisher of his people's faith, is their refuge; to Him they make application, and He will help them; and when they are encouraged, they will be enabled to strengthen their brethren. — BUSH: The result went, 1. To illustrate the divine condescension. God, instead of being offended with his servant, kindly acceded to his request. A fellow creature who had given such solemn promises, would have been quite indignant at finding his veracity seemingly called in question. . . .

2. To show the efficacy of prayer. It was prayer that prevailed in this instance. With great humility and much tenderness of spirit, Gideon besought the divine interposition. — TR.]

*Gideon in the field. His numerous army reduced, by divinely prescribed tests, to three hundred men.*

## CHAPTER VII. 1-8.

- 1 Then [And] Jerubbaal (who *is* Gideon) and all the people that *were* with him, rose up early and pitched [encamped] beside the well of Harod [near En-Harod]: so that [and] the host [camp] of the Midianites were [was] on the north side of  
 2 them by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.<sup>1</sup> And the Lord [Jehovah] said unto Gideon. The people that *are* with thee *are* too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand  
 3 hath saved me. Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever *is* fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early [turn away] from Mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and  
 4 there remained ten thousand. And the Lord [Jehovah] said unto Gideon, The people *are* yet *too* many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there; and it shall be *that* of whom I say unto thee, This [one] shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This [one] shall  
 5 not go with thee, the same shall not go. So he brought down the people unto the water: and the Lord [Jehovah] said unto Gideon; Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every  
 6 one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. And the number of them that lapped, *putting* their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest  
 7 of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. And the Lord [Jehovah] said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the *other* people go every man  
 8 unto his place. So the people [And they] took [the] victuals [from the people] in their hand, and their trumpets;<sup>2</sup> and he sent all the *rest* of Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men. And the host [camp] of Midian was beneath him in the valley.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 1.—Dr. Cassel, taking לו in the last clause of this verse (and also in ver. 8) as if it were לִפְנֵי, renders thus: "And he had the camp of Midian before him in the valley, to the north of the hill Moreh." The E. V. is more correct. Literally rendered, the clause says that "the camp of Midian was to him (Gideon) on the north, at (בֵּין). cf. Ges. *Lex.* s. v., 3, h) the hill of Moreh, in the valley."—Tr.]

[2 Ver. 8.—On the rendering of this clause, see the commentary below. Keil translates similarly ("of the people," instead of "from the people"), and remarks: "הָעָם cannot be subject, partly on account of the sense—for the three hundred who are without doubt the subject, cf. ver. 16, cannot be called הָעָם in distinction of פְּלִי־אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל—partly also on account of the אֲתֵּי־יָדָה, which would then, against the rule, be without the article, cf. Oes. *Gram.* 117, 2. Rather read אֲתֵּי־יָדָה הָעָם, as Sept. and Targum." So also Bertheau.—Tr.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 1. And they encamped near En Harod. The great probability that Ophrah is to be sought somewhere to the northwest of Jezreel (the modern Zerîn), has already been indicated above. The battle also must be located in the same region, as appears from the course of the flight, related farther on. The camp of Midian was in the valley, to the north of a hill. Now, since we are told that Gideon's camp was on a hill (ver. 4), below which, and north of another, Midian was encamped, it is evident that Gideon occupied a position north of Midian, and had that part of the plain of Jezreel in which the enemy lay, below him, towards the south. The height near which the hostile army was posted, is

called the Hill Moreh. Moreh (מֹרֶה, from מָרָה), signifies indicator, pointer, overseer and teacher. The mountain must have commanded a free view of the valley. This applies exactly to the Tell el Mutsellim, described by Robinson (*Bibl. Res.* iii. 117). He says: "The prospect from the Tell is a noble one, embracing the whole of the glorious plain, than which there is not a richer upon earth. It was now extensively covered with fields of grain; with many tracts of grass, like meadows; . . . Zerîn (Jezreel) was distinctly in view, bearing S. 74° E." To this must be added that the Arabic Mutsellim has essentially the same meaning as Moreh, namely, overseer, district-governor, etc. The peculiar position of the Tell has probably

given it the same kind and degree of importance in all ages. A little north of Tell Mutsellim, Robinson's map has a Tell Kireh, which may mark the position of Gideon; for that must have been very near and not high, since Gideon could descend from it and hurry back in a brief space of the same night. It may be suggested, at least, that Kireh has some similarity of sound with Charod (Harod).<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 2. The people that are with thee are too many. Victory over Midian, and deliverance from their yoke, would avail Israel nothing, if they did not gain the firm conviction that God is their Helper. The least chance of a natural explanation, so excites the pride of man, that he forgets God. Whatever Gideon had hitherto experienced, his vocation as well as the fulfillment of his petitions, was granted in view of his humility, which would not let him think anything great of himself. The number of warriors with which he conquers must be so small, that the miraculous character of the victory shall be evident to everybody. This belief in divine intervention will make Israel free; for not the winning of a battle, but only obedience toward God can keep it so.

Ver. 3. Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn back and depart from Mount Gilead.<sup>2</sup> The narrative is evidently very condensed; for it connects the result of the proclamation immediately with God's command to Gideon to make it, without mentioning its execution by him. By reason of this brevity, sundry obscurities arise, both here and farther on, which it is difficult to clear up. The words *וַיִּפְּרֹחַ מִחֵר מִהָרֵּךְ*, "and turn away from Mount Gilead," have long given offense, and occasioned various unnecessary conjectures. *וַיִּפְּרֹחַ*, it is true, occurs only in this passage; but it is manifestly cognate with *מִפְּרִיחַ*, circle, crown. Hence, that the verb means to turn away or about, is certain, especially as the Greek *σφαίρα*, ball, sphere, must belong to the same root.<sup>3</sup> Gideon, in bidding the timorous depart, after the milder *יָשָׁב*, uses the somewhat stronger *וַיִּפְּרֹחַ*: "let the fearful take himself off!"<sup>4</sup>

But what is meant by turning from "Mount Gilead?"<sup>5</sup> For Gilead is beyond the Jordan (ch. v. 17). It has therefore been proposed to read *גִּלְבֹּא*, Gilboa, instead of *הָרֵךְ*, Gilead, which would be a very unfortunate substitution. For, in the first place, the battle did not occur at Mount

Gilboa; and in the next place, by this reading the peculiar feature of the sentence would be lost. To be sure, Gilead does not here mean the country of that name east of the Jordan. Indeed, it does not seem to indicate a country at all, but rather the character of the militant tribe. Gilead belongs to the tribe of Manasseh. From Manasseh likewise descended Gilead, a son of Machir (Num. xxvi. 29); and the sons of Machir took possession of Gilead (Num. xxxii. 40). Nevertheless, the Song of Deborah distinguishes between Machir and Gilead. The name Machir there represents the peaceable character of the tribe: Gilead stands for its military spirit. Joshua xvii. 1 affirms expressly that Gilead was a "man of war." From Gilead heroes like Jephthah descend. Jehu also is reckoned to it.<sup>6</sup> The valor of Jabesh Gilead is well known. In a bad sense, Hosea (ch. vi. 8) speaks of Gilead as the home of wild and savage men. Here, therefore, Gilead stands in very significant contrast with *יָרֵךְ*: "let him," cries the hero, "who is cowardly and fearful depart from the mountain of Gilead, who (as Jephthah said) takes his life in his hand, unterrified before the foe."<sup>7</sup> For the rest, however, the name Gilead was not confined to the east-Jordanic country. This appears from ch. xii. 4, where we read that the Ephraimites called the Gileadites fugitives of Ephraim, "for Gilead was between Ephraim and Manasseh." Now, Ephraim's territorial possessions were all west of the Jordan. From this, therefore, and from the fact that the western half tribe of Manasseh and the tribe of Ephraim were partly interlocated (cf. Josh. xvii. 8-10), it is evident that the names of the eastern Gilead were also in vogue on this side the Jordan. He who would be with Gilead, must be no "*יָרֵךְ*" (trembler): out of 32,000 men, 22,000 perceive this, and retire.

That numbers do not decide in battle, is a fact abundantly established by the history of ancient nations; nor has modern warfare, though it deals in the life and blood of the masses, brought discredit upon it. It is a fine remark which Tacitus (*Annal.* xiv. 36, 3) puts into the mouth of Suetonius: *Etiam in multis legionibus, paucos esse qui praelia profugiant*—"even with many legions, it is always the few who win the battle." The instance adduced by Serarius from Livy (xxix. 1), has no proper relation to that before us. It would be more suitable to instance Leonidas, if it be true, as Herodotus (vii. 220) intimates, that at the battle of

1 Bertheau assumes that En Charod is the same fountain as the modern Ain Jâlûd, flowing from the base of Gilboa, see *Rob. Bibl. Res.* ii. 323. Accordingly, Gilboa would be the mountain on which Gideon was encamped, and Little Hermon (on which see *Rob.* ii. 326) would answer to Moreh. On this combination Keil remarks, that "although possible, it is very uncertain, and scarcely reconcilable with the statements of ver. 23 ff. and ch. viii. 4, as to the road taken by the defeated Midianites"—Ta.]

2 Epaminondas, when advancing against the Spartans at Leuctra, observed the unreliable character of some confederates. To prevent being endangered by them, he caused it to be proclaimed, that "Whoever of the Boeotians wished to withdraw, were at liberty to do so." Polyænus, ii. 3.

3 Under this view, the conjectures adopted by Benfey (*Gr. Gr.* i. 579; ii. 367) fall away of themselves.

4 [The German is: "*Wer feige sei, tolle sich vom Berge.*" The author then adds: "The German *drollen, trollen*, has in fact a similar origin. It means 'to turn one's self'; *droll* is that which is turned, also a 'coil.' *Sich trollen* [English to pack one's self], is proverbially equivalent to taking one's departure, *recedere*. Cf. Grimm, *Wörterbuch*, ii. 1429, etc."—Ta.]

5 Dathe proposes to read *ad montem*, and Michaelis to point *מִהָרֵךְ*, "quickly," instead of *מִהָרֵךְ*, "from the mountain." Neither proposition can be entertained (cf. Döderlein, *Theol. Biblioth.*, iii. 326).

6 [By the ancient Jewish expositors, cf. Dr. Cassel's article on Jehu in Herzog's *Realencykl.* vi. 466. "In so doing they probably explained son of Nimshi (*נִמְשִׁי*) as son of a Manassite (*מַנַּשֶּׁה*), i. e. a son out of the tribe of Manasseh."—Ta.]

7 [Ewald (*Gesch. Israel's*, ii. 500, note) has the following on this proclamation: "From the unusual words and their rounding, it is easy to perceive that they contain an ancient proverb, which in its literal sense would be especially appropriate to the tribe of Manasseh. 'Mount Gilead,' the place of Jacob's severest struggles (Gen. xxxi. etc.), may very well, from patriarchal times, have become a proverbial equivalent for 'scene of conflict,' which is manifestly all that the name here means. And Manasseh was the very tribe which had often found that for them also Gilead was a place of battle, cf. p. 391."—Ta.]

**Thermopylæ** he dismissed his confederates because he knew them to be deficient in bravery; in relation to which, however, Plutarch's vehement criticism is to be considered (cf. Kaltwasser, in *Plut. Moral. Abhandl.*, vi. 732). Noteworthy is the imitation of Gideon's history in a North-German legend (Müllenhoff, *Sagen*, etc. p. 426). In that as in many other legends, magic takes the place of God.

Vers. 4. **Bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there.** There is no lack of water in this region. Ponds, wells, and bodies of standing water, are described by Robinson (*Bibl. Res.* iii. 115, 116). Beside these, Gideon had the Kishon behind him, which in the rainy season is full of water.

Vers. 5-7. **Every one that lappeth of the water.** The meaning of this test, the second which Gideon was to apply, is obscured by the brevity of the narrative. The question is, What characteristic did it show in the 300 men, that they did not drink water kneeling, but lapped it with their tongues, like dogs. Bertheau has followed the view of Josephus (*Ant.* v. 6, 3), which makes those who drink after the manner of dogs to be the faint-hearted. According to this view, the victory is the more wonderful, because it was gained by the timid and fearful. But this explanation does not accord with the traditional exegesis of the Jews, as handed down by others. Moreover, it contradicts the spirit of the whole narrative. When Gideon was chosen, it was for the very reason that he was a "valiant hero" (ch. vi. 12). All those who were deficient in courage were sent home by the proclamation (ver. 3). If faint-heartedness were demanded, the brave should have been dismissed. Finally, God saves by few, indeed, if they trust in Him, but not by cravens. Cowardice is a negative quality, unable even to trust. To do wonders with cowards, is a contradiction *in adjecto*; for if they fight, they are no longer cowards. Cowardice is a condition of soul which cannot become the medium of divine deeds; for even the valiant few, when they attack the many and conquer, are strong only because of their divine confidence. Besides, it is plainly implied that all those who now went with Gideon, were resolute for war. The Jewish interpretation, communicated by Raschi, is evidently far more profound. Gideon, it says, can ascertain the religious antecedents of his men from the way in which they prepare to drink. Idolaters were accustomed to pray kneeling before their idols. On this account, kneeling, even as a mere bodily posture, had become unpopular and ominous in Israel, and was avoided as much as possible. Hence, he who in order to drink throws himself on his knees, shows thereby, in a perfectly free and natural manner, that this posture is nothing unusual to him; whereas those who have never been accustomed to kneel, feel no need of doing it now, and as naturally refrain from it. It would have been difficult for Gideon to have ascertained, in any other way, what had been the attitude of his men towards idolatry. While quenching their eager thirst, all deliberation being forgotten, they freely and unrestrainedly indicate to what posture they were habituated. It is a principle pervading the legendary lore of all nations, that who and what a person is, can only be ascertained by observing him when

under no constraint of any kind.<sup>1</sup> The queen of a Northern legend exchanges dresses with her maid; but she who is not the queen, is recognized by her drinking (cf. Simrock, *Quellen des Shaksps.* iii. 171). That which is here in Scripture accepted with reference to religious life and its recognition, popular literature applies to the keen discriminating observance of social life. — This view of the mark afforded by the act of kneeling, is not opposed by the fact that in the temple the worshipper bowed himself before God. It is announced to Elijah (1 Kgs. xix. 18), that only 7,000 shall be left: "All the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." To bow the knee is an honor due to God alone. Hence, Mordecai refuses to kneel to a man (*Esth.* iii. 5). Hence, God proclaims by the prophet (*Isa.* xlv. 23): "Unto me every knee shall bow." The three hundred — this is what God makes Gideon to know — have never kneeled before Baal; they are clean men; and with clean vessels, men, and animals, God is accustomed to do wonderful things. Midian's idolatrous people shall be smitten only by such as have always been free from their idols.

However satisfactory and in harmony with the Biblical spirit this explanation may be as it stands, let something nevertheless be added to it. Verse 5 says: **בְּלִשְׁוֹנוֹ מִדֵּהֲמִים בָּאִשָּׁר יִלָּךְ**. In verse 6 the phraseology changes; it speaks of those who **הִמְלִיכֵהֶם בָּדָם אֶל-פִּיהֶם**. Now, as they would naturally use the hollow hand to take up the water and carry it to the mouth, thus making it answer to the concave tongue of a dog, it is evident that we must so understand the words quoted from ver. 5, as if it read: **בָּדָדוֹ מִדֵּהֲמִים בָּאִשָּׁר יִלָּךְ**, "all who sip water with their hands, as the dog with his tongue." However that may be, the circumstance must not be overlooked that a comparison with the sipping of a dog is here instituted; for if the comparison had no special significance, it would have sufficed to distinguish between those who drank standing and those who drank kneeling. It was the perception of this, doubtless, which induced the common reference to what *Ælian* (*Hist. Anim.* vi. 53) says of the dogs of Egypt, that for fear of crocodiles they drink quickly, while running. And from this arose the view, already confuted, that the three hundred who imitated the lapping of dogs, were spiritless and cowardly. But the comparison must be viewed more profoundly. Those Egyptian dogs are the type, not of cowardice, but of caution. It is known that the crocodiles of the Nile were not the only ones of their kind eager to seize on dogs; those of Central America (the Cayman alligator) are not less so. In Cuba, likewise, dogs will not drink from rivers, lest their greedy foe might suddenly spring on them (cf. *Oken. Naturgesch.*, vi. 666). The crocodile is the image of the adversary; against whom they are on their guard, who do not so drink, that from eagerness to quench their thirst, they fall into his hands.<sup>2</sup> Sensual haste would forget the threatening danger. To these considerations, add the following:<sup>3</sup> The heroic achievement of the three hundred is a surprise, in which they throw them-

<sup>1</sup> The same popular belief recurs in various forms; in many of which the rudeness and *naïveté* of the manner conceals the profundity of the thought. Cf. Grimm, *Kindermärchen*, ii. 229; Müllenhoff, *Sagen*, p. 384.

<sup>2</sup> An image of heathenism and Israel, which from incon-

<sup>3</sup> The most remarkable confirmation of this narrative

selves, as it were, into the jaws of the sleeping foe. Now, the ancients tell of an animal, "similar to a dog," which, hostile to the crocodile, throws itself into the jaws of the reptile when asleep, and kills it internally. This animal, called Hydrus, or **הַדְרִיּוֹן** (cf. *Phys. Syrus*, ed. Tychem, cap. xxxi. p. 170), has been rightly considered to be the Ichneumon, the crocodile's worst enemy. Its name signifies, "Tracker." Tracking, **יִצְבֵּבֵב**, is the special gift of dogs. Among five animals before whom the strong must fear, the Talmud (*Sabbat*, 77, b) names the **כְּלָבִית**,<sup>1</sup> from **קָלַב**,

dog, as being a terror of the **לִוְיָתָן**, crocodile. The band who drink like the Egyptian dog, perform a deed similar to that which the dog-like animal has ascribed to it. They throw themselves upon the sleeper; and, courageous though few, become the terror of the mighty foe. If it may be assumed that for the sake of such hints the similitude of the sipping dog was chosen for the three hundred companions of Gideon, the whole passage, it must be allowed, becomes beautiful and clear. He who has never inclined to idolatry, who has exercised caution against hostile blandishments and mastered his own desires,—he, like the animal before alluded to, will be fitted, notwithstanding his weakness, to surprise and overcome the enemy, how strong soever he be. The similitude, in this view, is analogous to various other significant psychological propositions, expressive of fundamental moral principles.<sup>2</sup>

Ver. 8. They took the victuals from the people in their hands. The words of the original are: **נִיחָקוּ אֶת-יָצוֹד הָעָם בְּיָדָם**. Offense has naturally been taken at **יָצוֹד**: instead of which **צֶנֶד**, in the *stat. constr.*, was to be expected. The older Jewish expositors endeavored to support the unusual form by a similar one in Ps. xlv. 5, **יִצְנָה**; **יָצוֹד**; but the two are not exactly parallel, either in sense or form, to say nothing of Olshausen's proposal to emend the latter passage also. On the other hand, it is certainly surprising that **צֶנֶד** is not found in a single manuscript, although it was so natural to substitute it in effect, as was done by the ancient versions. Nor is it clear that **יָצוֹד** can be read.<sup>3</sup> It is not to be assumed that the three hundred men took all the provisions of the other thousands. It would be quite impossible to comprehend how the former were benefited by such superabundance, or how the latter could dispense with all means of subsistence. The sense can only be that the three hundred took their provisions out of the supplies for the whole army. As the great body of the army was about to leave them, this little troop took from the common stores as much as they needed. We are not therefore to correct **יָצוֹד** into **צֶנֶד**, but to supply **מִן** before **הָעָם**. The matter is further explained by the addition **בְּיָדָם**. From the common stores of the supply-

train, they took what they needed for themselves in their own hands, for the others were going away. The case was not much different with the trumpets. The three hundred needed one each; so many had therefore to be taken from the people. There is nothing to show, nor is it to be assumed, that the other thousands kept none at all, or that at the outset the whole ten thousand had only three hundred trumpets. The three hundred took from the body of the army what, according to their numbers, they needed to venture the battle.—The others Gideon dismissed, "every one to his tent." To be dismissed, or to go to the tents, is the standing formula by which the cessation of the mobile condition of the army is indicated. The people are free from military duty; but they do not appear to have entirely disbanded.

He retained the three hundred. With these he intended to give battle; and the conflict was near at hand, for the hostile army lay before him in the valley below.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

STARKE: Christianity requires manliness; away, therefore, with those who always plead the weakness of the flesh.—THE SAME: It matters little how insignificant we are considered, if we only conquer.—THE SAME: We should regard, not the means which God uses for our physical and spiritual deliverance, but the God who uses them.—THE SAME: Though men do nothing, but only stand in the order appointed, God by his omnipotence can effect more than when they work their lustiest.—GERLACH: God's genuine soldiers never seek their strength in numbers, nor ever weaken their ranks by the reception of half-hearted, slothful, and timorous persons. In times of peace, they may for love's sake hold fellowship with many; but when battle is to be waged for the Lord, it is necessary to get rid of all those who could only weaken the host.

[BP. HALL: Gideon's army must be lessened. Who are so fit to be cashiered as the fearful? God bids him, therefore, proclaim license for all faint hearts to leave the field. An ill instrument may shame a good work. God will not glorify himself by cowards. As the timorous shall be without the gates of heaven, so shall they be without the lists of God's field. Although it was not their courage that should save Israel, yet without their courage God would not serve Himself of them. Christianity requires men; for if our spiritual difficulties meet not with high spirits, instead of whetting our fortitude, they quell it.—THE SAME: But now, who can but bless himself to find of two and thirty thousand Israelites, two and twenty thousand cowards? Yet all these in Gideon's march, made as fair a flourish of courage as the boldest. Who can trust the faces of men, that sees in the army of Israel above two for one timorous?—SCOTT: Many who have real faith and grace are unfit for special services, and unable to bear peculiar trials, from which therefore the Lord will exempt them; and to which He will appoint

legend in its symbolic import, is found in a German *sonder*, communicated by Birlinger (*Volkstümliches aus Schwaben*, i. 116), in which the she-wolf recognizes as genuine only those among her young who drink water, while she regards those who lap like dogs as young wolf-dogs, and her worst enemies. Accordingly, dogs who lap, in the

manner which Gideon wishes to see imitated by his faithful ones, are the enemies of the rapacious wolf.

<sup>1</sup> [*Nomen vernis aqualitis, qui ingreditur aures piscium majorum.* Buxtorff, *Lex. Talm.*—*Tr.*]

<sup>2</sup> Cf. my Essay on *Den armen Heinrich*, in the *Weim Jahrbuch für Deutsche Sprache*, i. 410.

<sup>3</sup> Keil is among those who propose to adopt it

those to whom He has given superior hardiness, boldness, and firmness of spirit; and very trivial incidents will sometimes make a discovery of men's

capacities and dispositions, and show **who are and who are not** to be depended on in arduous undertakings. — Tr.]

*Gideon is directed to advance against the enemy; but to increase his confidence he is authorized to make a previous visit to the hostile encampment.*

## CHAPTER VII. 9-11.

9 And it came to pass the same night, that the Lord [Jehovah] said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto [descend against] the host [camp]; for I have delivered it into thine hand. But if thou [yet] fear to go down, go thou [first] with Phurah thy servant down to the host [camp]: And thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto [against] the host [camp]. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that *were* in the host [camp].

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL

Ver. 9. Arise, descend! The three hundred who are with Gideon are enough. The hero may venture the assault with them. The hosts of Midian, despite their numbers, will not withstand their enthusiasm of faith. Not fortune, but God, will help the brave. There is no more time for delay. The harvest waits for the reaper; of that Gideon may convince himself. Let him hear what they say, and he will learn that they are more in dread than to be dreaded. The command addressed to Gideon in this verse, bids him make a general assault with all his men (which Bertheau has failed to perceive). It is only when the undertaking still appears too venturesome to him, that he is bidden first to convince himself of the spirit which rules in the camp of Midian. Again and again does the narrative inculcate the lesson that victory results only from full, undivided, unbroken, and enthusiastic confidence. Every shadow of hesitation is removed by God, before the hero advances to his great exploit.

Ver. 10. Go thou with Phurah thy servant. The case of Diomed, who according to Homer (*Il.* x. 220), ventures into the camp of the Trojans, is not altogether analogous.<sup>1</sup> Diomed is to find out what the Trojans are doing, and design to do; Gideon is only to learn the spirit of his enemy, as they freely converse together. Diomed also desires a companion, "for two going together better observe what is profitable." Gideon's servant goes with him, not for this purpose, but that he also may hear what Gideon hears, and may testify to his fellow soldiers of what Gideon tells them, so that they may follow with the same assured courage with which he leads. The two commands are very clearly distinguished. Gideon with his troop were to advance "against" (אֶל, as in ch. v. 13) the encampment; but Gideon and his servant are to

go "unto" (אֵלַי) it. — The name Phurah (פְּרָחָה), does not occur elsewhere. *Pere* (פֶּרֶה or פֶּרֶהָ) is a wild ass, *onager*, an animal much talked of and greatly dreaded among the Orientals. Here, however, the Masorites have pointed the same radicals פֶּרֶהָ; according to which the name of the servant, as signifying "Branch" (פְּרָחָה), was not unaptly chosen. — נַעַר means both boy and servant or attendant.

Ver. 11. As far as the line (limit) of the vanguard to the camp, אֶל-קֵצֵה הַחֲמִשִּׁים. The meaning of הַחֲמִשִּׁים is obscure, although the rendering of the LXX. at Josh. i. 14 affords a hint toward a probable explanation. חֲמִשָּׁה is the small of the back, above the hips (*lumbus, lumbi quinque inferiores spinæ vertebræ*), about which the girdle, *zona*, was worn. The *chamushim* were not, however, simply those who were girdled and equipped, but as the LXX. indicate in the passage referred to, the *εὐζωνοί*, the *well-girdled*; which term the Greeks also used to designate the light-armed troops, who were everywhere in use as van and rear guards. Among many passages in Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, and others, it will be sufficient to quote the following from the *Cyropædia* (v. 3, 56), as illustrating this use of the Greek word: "Ὅτι πρὸ παντὸς τοῦ στρατεύματος πεζοὺς εὐζώνους . . . προῖκτεμιν." The same position as vanguard is, according to Josh. i. 14, occupied in the Israelitish host by the two and a half trans-Jordanic tribes: "Ye shall march before your brethren as *chamushim*." These tribes had left their families beyond the Jordan, and were therefore freer and lighter, *expeditiores*. To the same class of soldiery belonged the *chamushim*, to whom

<sup>1</sup> In the inn "Zur Hohen Schul" in Ulm, there is still shown a portrait of Gustavus Adolphus, as during the war he appeared, disguised, in that city, as a spy, which is only a legend. In like manner, it is told of Alfred the Great of

England, that in order to inspect for himself the situation of the Danes, he entered their camp as a harper. *Hume, Hist. of Eng.* i. 68.

Gideon approached. They formed the outer rim of the encampment, and beyond them Gideon did not venture to proceed, if for no other reason, for

<sup>1</sup> [Bertheau says, indeed, that the *chamushim* numbered 135,000 men, cf. ch. viii. 10; but by the *chamushim*, he, like most scholars, understands not the vanguard of the hostile army, but the whole body of fighting men in the army. "The eastern tribes," he says, "had invaded the land with their herds and tents, i. e. families, ch. vi. 5.

Among such nomadic tribes, the warriors, called חַמֻּשִׁים,

want of time. What Bertheau says about 135,000 men who constituted this body,<sup>1</sup> is like his whole explanation of the passage, a misapprehension.

or חַמֻּשִׁים. Josh. iv. 12, 13, are distinguished from the body of the people. The former, in view of the impending battle, were not scattered among the mass of the people, but were collected together in the camp to the number of 135,000." — Tr.]

*Gideon and his attendant secretly visit the hostile camp. The dream of the soldier and its interpretation. The night-surprise, confusion, and pursuit.*

#### CHAPTER VII. 12–25.

- 12 And the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and all the children [sons] of the east, lay along in the valley like grasshoppers [locusts] for multitude; and their camels *were* without number, as the sand by the sea-side for multitude. And when Gideon was come, behold, *there was* a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and lo, a [round] cake of barley-bread tumbled into [rolled itself against] the host [camp] of Midian, and came unto a [the] tent [*i. e.* the tents; the singular, used collectively], and smote it that it fell, and overturned it that
- 14 the tent [*i. e.* all the tents] lay along. And his fellow answered, and said, This *is* nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a [the] man of Israel: *for* [omit: for] into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host [camp]. And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host [camp] of Israel, and said, Arise; for the Lord [Jehovah] hath delivered into your hand the host [camp] of Midian. And he divided the three hundred men *into* three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's
- 17 hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps [torches] within the pitchers. And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be *that* as I do, so shall ye do. When I blow with a [the] trumpet, I and all that *are* with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the
- 19 camp, and say, *The sword* of the Lord [Jehovah], and of Gideon. So Gideon, and the hundred men that *were* with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that *were* in their hands. And the three companies blew the trumpets [all at once], and brake the pitchers, and held [took] the lamps [torches] in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow
- 21 *withal*: and they cried, The sword of the Lord [Jehovah], and of Gideon. And they stood every man in his place round about the camp; and all the host [camp] ran [*was* thrown into commotion], and cried, and fled. And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and [meanwhile] the Lord [Jehovah] set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout [and against] all the host [camp]: and the host [camp] fled to Beth-shittah [the House of Acacias] in [toward] Zererath [Zererah], and [omit: and] to the
- 23 border [edge] of Abel-meholah, unto [near] Tabbath. And the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites. And Gideon sent messengers throughout all Mount Ephraim, saying, Come down against the Midianites, and take [seize] before them the waters unto Beth-barah and [the] Jordan. Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and took [seized] the waters unto Beth-barah and [the]
- 25 Jordan. And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb [Raven and Wolf]; and they slew Oreb upon [at] the rock Oreb [Raven's Rock], and Zeeb they slew at the wine-press of Zeeb [Wolf's Press], and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on [from] the other side [of the] Jordan.



## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 12. **And Midian and Amalek.** The pregnant and musing character of the style of our Book, notwithstanding its entire simplicity and artlessness, shows itself especially in the episode concerning Gideon. In order to emphasize the contrast which they present to the scanty means of Israel — the handful of men who followed Gideon — the countless numbers and vast resources of the enemy are once more pointed out. On one side, there are three hundred men, on foot; on the other, a multitude numerous as an army of locusts, riders on camels countless as the sands of the sea-shore (cf. above, on ch. vi. 5). This contrast must needs be insisted on here, that so the wonderful help of God may stand out in bold relief; that Israel may learn that victory comes not of numbers, but is the gift of God, and that in all their conflicts, it is the spirit of God who endows their enemies with victorious courage, that He may chasten his people, or fill them with fear and confusion, notwithstanding their multitude and might, that Israel may be delivered. God governs man's free will. He turns the hearts of men according to his wisdom. He raises the courage of the few and small to victory, and brings the proud and great to grief. It is his work that Gideon with three hundred men dares attack the enormous multitude; his doing that, as the soldier's dream and its interpretation indicate, sad forebodings fill the heart of the proud and mighty foe, and cause it to faint before the coming conflict.

Ver. 13. **And as Gideon came, behold, a man told a dream.** From the enemy's dream, Gideon will learn the frame of mind in which they are. For this end he was to go into the encampment, thereby to perfect his own confidence. Jehovah is God of the heathen also. Although they do not believe in Him, they are yet instruments in his hand. It was He who, without their knowing it, raised them up and directed their way. They did not learn to know Him from his works; and yet He shone above them, like the sun concealed by clouds and vapors. The manifest God they fail to see by day; but the Hidden and Unknown they seek in dreams. All heathenism is, to a certain extent, a great dream; and it is in accordance with its nature, that as all nations dream, so all are disposed to find in dreams the indications of a hidden truth. Their interpreters did not know the God of Truth in himself; but He who turns the nations as water-courses, fills their hearts, when He pleases, with visions and interpretations which have their rise in truth. Hence, when in Scripture, God frequently favors heathen with dreams of truth, He does not thereby sanctify every dream; but only uses dreams to influence the men whom He takes under the guidance of his wisdom, — the Philistine king, for instance, Laban the Aramean, the Egyptian baker and butler, — because they already look on dreams as such as hiding a divine mystery. Dreams appeared the more significant, when great events were manifestly at hand. And in the condition of mental excitement which under such circumstances seizes on men, they are natural and to be expected. Thus elsewhere also we hear of dreams by generals before battle. Leonidas, Plutarch (on *Hierodotus*) tells us, had a dream before the battle

of Thermopylæ, which disclosed to him the future destinies of Greece and Thebes. Xerxes had a dream previous to his Greek campaign; and Gustavus Adolphus is said to have dreamed before the battle of Leipzig, that he was wrestling with Tilly (Joh. Scheffer, *Memorab. Suet. Gentis*, p. 23). It was not unknown to the Midianites that Gideon, though but a contemned foe, lay encamped on the mountain. The peculiar dream must therefore the more impress the soldier who dreamed it.

**A round barley-loaf rolled itself.** The narrative, notwithstanding its simplicity and brevity, is very vivid and forcible. The animated רָלָה recurs three times. The dream itself also portrays the contrast with which it has to do, with uncommon clearness. The barley-loaf is the symbol of wretchedness and poverty,<sup>1</sup> over against the luxury and wealth of Midian. Indigent Bedouins, who have nothing else, at this day still subsist on barley-bread, which they sometimes dip in goat's fat (Ritter, xiv. 1003).<sup>2</sup> The cake or loaf is here called מַלֵּי, a term variously explained. The definition of Gesenius, who derives it from מָלַץ = מָלַץ, to roll, seems to be the most likely. The mention of the round form of the loaf was necessary to bring its rolling vividly before the imagination, since all loaves were not round. The Arabs of the desert, according to Niebuhr, take a round lump of dough, and bury it in hot coals, until they think it baked. Then they knock off the ashes, and eat it (*Beschreib. Arab.* p. 52). Such a wretched loaf is that which the Midianite sees rolling in his dream. It signifies Gideon and Israel, who, by reason of their enemies, were reduced to poverty and distress (ch. vi. 4). It comes rolling "against" the encampment (רָלָה בְּפָנֵינוּ), not "in" it, as the expositors have it; for the dream depicts the coming event.

**And it came to the tent, הִסְתָּהּ.** *The tent* — with the article. It would be an error to think here, with Bertheau, who follows Josephus, of the tent of the king; for there were several kings. The tent of the dream stands collectively for all the tents of the encampment; for the very idea of the dream is that the rolling loaf comes into collision with the tents in general. One tent after another is struck by it, falls, and is turned upside down. הִסְתָּהּ, and "the tent," all the tents, one after another, lay overturned. By this *venaphal*, the narrator recapitulates, as it were the falling of the several tents, which in the vivid dream vision, in which all notions of time and space are forgotten, appeared like the downfall of a single tent.<sup>3</sup>

Ver. 14. **And his fellow answered.** The fact that a true interpretation is given by one comrade to the other, must be specially noted. The first has not asked, but only related; the other is no sooth-sayer, but only a companion. So much the more significant is the frame of mind in which the interpretation originates. For there exists no visible ground for thinking it possible that, notwithstanding their great power, Midian may be delivered into the hands of a man like Gideon. But

<sup>1</sup> Josephus also understands it thus: "ἀσθενέστατος ἄβρωτον." His further interpretation, however, can scarcely be followed.

<sup>2</sup> [Cf. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, ii. 166. — Ta.]

<sup>3</sup> [WORDSWORTH: "The tent was an expressive emblem

of the Midianites, being nomads; their tent was their all in all. Their wives, their children, their cattle, their goods their vesture, their treasure, were all collected in it and about it." — Ta.]

what does exist, is an evil conscience. Through seven years Midian had plundered and trodden Israel. This is the first time, in all these years, that resistance is attempted. That in spite of distress and numerical weakness, Israel ventures now to begin a war, must of itself excite attention and make an impression. How long had it been, since Israel had unfurled the banners of its God! Proud tyranny is already startled at the prospect of resistance from a few faithful ones.<sup>1</sup> According to Herodotus (vii. 16), Artaban says to Xerxes: "Men are wont to be visited in sleep by images of what they have thought on during the day." The principle applies in this case to both dreamer and interpreter. Dream and interpretation both reflect the forebodings of an evil conscience, which God is about to judge. The interpreter compares the rolling loaf with the sword of Gideon. (The lith-pael of לֶחֶם, here applied to that which symbolized the sword of Gideon (ver. 13), is also used by the sacred writer of the sword which kept the entrance to the garden of Eden. Gen. iii. 24.) He it is—continues the interpreter—who rises up against the domination of Midian: does he venture on this, and dreamest thou thus,—be sure that *his* God (hence the article with Elohîm, since without the article it also designates their gods) has delivered Midian into his power.

Ver. 15. When Gideon heard this. What Gideon hears is not merely the interpretation of a dream which confirms his brightest hopes. The dream is one which his enemies have, and the interpretation is their own. He hears in it an expression of the tone and mood of their minds. He learns that the confidence of the enemy is already broken by the reflection that Israel's Lord is once more in the field. Astonished and adoring, he and his attendant hear this wonder, as great and real as any other that God has shown him. They feel that God has done this—they see that He is leader and victor—with thanksgiving they bow before Him.<sup>2</sup>

Vers. 16-18. And he divided the three hundred men. Encouraged, Gideon hastens to act. He divides his band into three companies, so as to be able to surround the hostile encampment (cf. ver. 21). He bids the two companies who are to take their stations on the other sides, to attend to his signal, and gives them the battle-cry. Now, as to this cry, though ver. 18 gives it, "Of Jehovah and of Gideon," yet, since ver. 20 has, "Sword of Jehovah and of Gideon," it is evident that in the former verse the word "sword" is to be supplied. For the two companies who were to wait for the trumpet-blast of Gideon and those with him, could not understand the words of the distant cry, and

yet they also shouted, "Sword of Jehovah and of Gideon" (ver. 20). Moreover, the command must have been executed as it was given; and hence the fact that according to ver. 20 Gideon's own company joined in the longer form, proves that to have been originally given. The cry itself is very expressive. It tells the Midianites that the sword of the God whose people and faith they have oppressed, and of the man whose insignificance they have despised, whose family they have injured, and who through God becomes their conqueror, is about to be swung over their heads.

Vers. 19-21. And Gideon came to the border line of the camp about the beginning of the middle watch. From the mention of the middle watch, it has been justly inferred that the night must be considered as divided into three watches. It was still deep in the night when Gideon undertook the surprise. The middle watch was just begun; the sentinels, it is added, with good reason, had just (הָיָה) been set—for as the middle watch advanced, the army would begin to stir. Prodigious was the alarm that seized on Midian, when suddenly the trumpets elanged, the pitchers crashed, the thundering battle-cry broke out, the torches<sup>3</sup> blazed. . . . Accounts are not wanting in the history of other nations, of similar stratagems adopted by bold generals. Tacitus expresses himself on this subject after his own manner (*Annal.* i. 68, 4): "The clangor of trumpets and the glitter of arms (*sonus tubarum, fulgor armorum*) easily become destructive to a foe who thinks only of a few, half-armed opponents; the more unexpected the alarm, the greater the loss (*cadebant ut rebus secundis aridi, ita adversis incauti*)." So the Roman Minucius Rufus terrified the Scordisci, by causing trumpets to be blown from among the mountains round about, the sound of which, echoed by the rocks, spread fear and terror (Frontinus, *Stratagematicon*, ii. 3). The ancients named such surprises Panic terrors, because Pan put the enemies of Dionysus to flight with his horns<sup>4</sup> (cf. Polyænus, *Strategem.* i. and ii.).

The terror which seized on Midian was in truth a terror from God. This the simple narrative sets forth most classically. Ver. 16 had already stated that all had trumpets in their hands, and pitchers, with torches, whereby no hand was left free to use the sword. Ver. 20 says, still more explicitly, "they had the torches in their left, and the trumpets in their right hands." They did not use the sword, but only cried, "Sword of Jehovah and of Gideon." (Not, however, as if Gideon were put on a parallel with God: יְהוָה is to be

<sup>1</sup> Eschylus (*Persæ*, 188, etc.) represents poetically the forebodings and dreams of Atossa concerning the impending disaster of Xerxes; but the moral view, that such dreams were inspired by the evil conscience of the conquering tyrant, and that the insignificant people triumphed through God, is wanting.

<sup>2</sup> [Our author treats וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ as a plural, and translates: "they worshipped." The form is undoubtedly singular, cf. Gen. xxiii. 7; xxiv. 52; etc., and is so regarded by most grammarians, Ges. *Gram.* 75 Rem. 18; Green, 176, 1 Fürst, however, both in his Lexicon and in his Hebrew Concordance treats it as plural. In his Lexicon, s. v. שָׁחָה, he says: "וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּהוּ; plural, sometimes וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ, io pause וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּהוּ, sometimes וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּהוּ."—Ta.]

<sup>3</sup> [Dr. Thomson remarks (*L. & B.* ii. 166): "I have often seen the small oil lamp of the natives carried in a 'pitcher'

or earthen vessel at night." But the לֶפָרִיִּים of this history can scarcely be "oil lamps," for which נֵרֹת would be more appropriate. A better explanation is suggested by the following note in Smith's *Bible Dict.* (Art. Gideon): "It is curious to find 'lamps and pitchers' in use for a similar purpose at this very day in the streets of Cairo. The *Zabit* or *Agha* of the police carries with him at night, 'a torch which burns, soon after it is lighted, without a flame, excepting when it is waved through the air, when it suddenly blazes forth; it therefore answers the same purpose as our dark lantern. The burning end is sometimes concealed in a small pot or jar, or covered with something else, when not required to give light (*Lacæ, Mod. Egypt.*, i. ch. iv.).'"—Ta.]

<sup>4</sup> A similar maneuver terrified the inhabitants of Heræum in Achæa, when Diotus besieged them. Polyænus, ii. 36.

taken as supplementing the preceding words — "even that committed to Gideon;" for Gideon was the visible bearer of God's sword.) Hence, also, ver. 21 says: "They stood (the troops of Gideon) round about the encampment;" i. e., they stand, not otherwise attacking, but simply blowing their trumpets; yet the enemy takes to "running"

(נָסוּ) stands contrasted with נִצְבְּרוּ. Just as in Joshua's time the walls of Jericho fell, while the trumpets of Israel sounded, so here it is — "These blew, those fled." Terror and disorder ruled the hour in the Midianitish camp. In the darkness and confusion, they no longer knew what they did. Hence, ver. 22 states that "while the three hundred blew the trumpets" — this is intentionally repeated, and shows that they scarcely needed a sword against Midian — the Midianites thought themselves attacked by enemies, and raged among themselves, for "Jehovah had set every man's sword against his fellow, and against the whole camp," or as we say, in cases of great confusion, "All against one, one against all."

Ver. 22. And the host fled to Beth-shittah (the House of Acacias), towards Zererah, to the edge of Abel-meholah, near Tabbath. The direction of the flight, and the situation of the places named, can only be inferred from the connection and from a comparison of other passages. The mention of the places must have had a local significance for the reader who was acquainted with their situation. From ch. viii. we learn that the Midianites did not flee in one body, but in several divisions. This is as might be expected, seeing the army was composed of different tribes — Midianites, Amalekites, and "Sons of the East." This separation in flight is also indicated by the statement of the places to which they fled. First, they are said to have fled "to Beth-shittah, towards Zererah," by which one line of flight is given. When it is further said that they fled "to the edge of Abel-meholah, near Tabbath," the intention cannot be to prolong the first line, which is already terminated by the phrase "towards Zererah," but a second is indicated. This also explains the measures adopted by Gideon. Being unable to follow both himself, he calls on Ephraim to cut off the other line of flight. The enemy's effort was to gain the fords of the Jordan. That one through which kings Zebah and Zalmunna must have passed (ch. viii. 5), seeing they had the start of the

others, is evidently indicated by זֶרֶרָה, "towards Zererah." Many codices have זֶרְדָּה, 'toward Zeredah,' *dalth* being substituted for *resh*. Kimchi, however, expressly calls attention to the two r's. But even in the earliest times Zeredah was read instead of Zererah, as appears from 2 Chron. iv. 17, where we find זֶרְדָּה. From the same passage compared with 1 Kgs. vii. 46, it is evident that Zeredah was identified with זֶרְדָּה. Zorthan. From both it appears to have been situated in the vicinity of the Jordan, not very far from Beth-shean (Beisân); and from Josh. ii. 15, 16, it may be inferred that near it there was a ford through the river. This explains why Midian took this line. They approached the river from the direction of Beth-shittah. Bertheau did well to connect this place with the modern village Shutta, mentioned by Robinson (ii. 356), and situated in the vicinity of Beth-shean. Keil's objection that it lies north of Gilboa, is of no force under our view of the localities as above indicated.

Zorthan (Zarthan) is mentioned in connection with a Succoth on this side the Jordan (1 Kgs. vii. 46). To this day the Jordan is passed near some ruins, not far from Beisân, which are supposed to indicate the site of Succoth (Ritter, xv. 446). The other line of fugitives took a more southerly direction, "towards the edge of Abel-meholah." The name of this place, celebrated as the birth-place of the prophet Elisha, has been preserved in the *Onomasticon* of Eusebius as Αβελμαελαι (ed. Parthey, p. 8). The fact that a שַׁפְרָה, edge or strand, is spoken of, indicates perhaps the presence of a wady. And in fact, coming down from Beisân or Zerin, the first western tributary of the Jordan met with, is a Wady el-Maleh (cf. Ritter, xviii. 432-448, in several passages). The fugitives are further said to have come to the edge of Abel-meholah "near Tabbath." There is still a city Tubâs, not far from Wady Maleh, usually considered to be the Thebez of the history of Abimelech (ch. ix. 50), for which, however, there is no compulsory ground.

Vers. 23-25. Gideon had a definite plan of pursuit. To carry it out, he required more men than the three hundred who had stood with him in the victory. The troops whom he had collected from Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali (ch. vi. 35), though subsequently dismissed, had not yet disbanded. They now returned (Zebulun only is not named), and assisted in the pursuit. But to overtake the Midianites on their fleet camels was not an easy matter. If not intercepted, those of them who were hastening southward, would get as safely over the Jordan as kings Zebah and Zalmunna had done near Beisân (at Zorthan). Gideon had foreseen this, and had early sent a message to Ephraim, over whose territory the fugitive host was passing, to "seize the waters as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan." Ephraim acted promptly, and a part of the Midianites were cut off. The "waters" can only mean some western tributaries of the Jordan; for Gideon's object is to prevent that body of the enemy which by his pursuit he has thus far kept away from the river, from gaining the lower fords and crossing over. He therefore desires "the waters" to be seized "to Beth-barah." This name Beth-barah cannot well have originated from Beth-abarah (Ford-house). It does not appear that the letter ב has been

dropped out of בֵּית־בְּרָה. Besides, if Beth-barah meant "Ford-house," the direction "to Beth-barah" would have been superfluous; for in that case the seizure of the Jordan would have included that of the "waters" and the ford. On the other hand, it was important to provide for the occupation of the "waters," or the particular stream intended, along its whole length to its source; lest, while it was guarded below, the enemy should cross it above. Beth-barah is therefore, with Eusebius and Jerome (*Onomast.*, p. 104), to be explained as "House of the Spring," "Well-house" (from בֵּית or בַּר), by which the narrative becomes clear and intelligible. Therewith, also fall all attempts to identify this Beth-barah with the Beth-abarah of Origen's reading at John i. 28; for that lay beyond the Jordan. Origen was, however, led by a right critical feeling. Instead of a Bethany, the people of his day doubtless spoke of a Beth-abarah in that region; and this, philologically and in fact, was one and the same with Bethany. For this trans-Jordanic Bethany — not to be confounded

with that near Jerusalem — is to be derived from *Beth-ain*, as *Beth-abarah* from *Beth-beer*, and like the latter signifies "House of the Spring," — a point to which I formerly directed attention in my "*Bericht über Ronan* (Berlin, 1864).

The Ephraimites, to their great glory, captured the two Midianite princes Oreb and Zeeb. It was the reward of their prompt obedience. Very suggestive are the names, under which these two princes of the desert had perhaps been especially dreaded — "Wolf" and "Raven." Among other nations also, these animals, frequenters of desolate places, and eager attendants on battle-fields, have furnished surnames for noted warriors. The Arabs, because the raven follows in the wake of caravans, call him *Ebül-Mikâl*, Father of the Swift Camel, or *Ibn-B-rsun*, Son of the Sumpter-horse. Noteworthy, at all events, is the conjunction of "Raven and Wolf." Coupled in the same way, we find them sacred to the Scandinavian Odin. Both ravens and wolves were also consecrated to Apollo. In the early Roman legends the woodpecker (*picus*) takes the place of the raven as companion of the wolf, and both belong to the God of War (cf. my *Schamir*, Erf. 1856, p. 103). The Arabs give to both the bird and the quadruped the common name *Ibnol-Erdh*, Son of the Earth (Hammer, *Namen der Araber*, p. 48).

The fame of the deed perpetrated itself in local designations, and the Raven's Rock and Wolf's Wine-press commemorate the disgrace of Midian. The *Odyssey* likewise speaks of a Raven's rock in Ithaca (xiii. 408), which name the scholiast derives from a fallen hunter (cf. Bochart, *Hierozoicon*, ii. 203); and the use of the German *Rabenstein*,<sup>1</sup> is undeniably analogous. In the other name, the term *jekab* (יֶכָב, wine-press) is borrowed from the hollow form of the object; hence, the name is here equivalent to Wolf's-hole. Similar historical allusions are supposed by the German Muse to lie concealed in Worms (from *Wurme*, slain by Siegfried) and in Drachenfels (cf. Grimm, *D. Heldens.*, pp. 155, 316).

In Haurân, Wetzstein heard the name el-Garâb, the Raven, applied to a spent volcano (p. 16); and Castle Kerek, at the south end of the Dead Sea, was called Ilisal-gorab, Raven's-castle (Ritter, xiv. 1042).

The important remark in ver. 25, that the heads of the two princes were brought to Gideon "from beyond the Jordan," induces the hope that the name and location of the "Raven's-rock" may yet be traced. The "waters" which Ephraim occupied, must have been those now known as Wady el-Faria. Below this wady, there is to this day a much used ford (Ritter, xv. 449); while over against it, on the eastern bank of the Jordan, there is the steep height of Jebel Ajlân, overlooking the Ghor, and commanding the confluent valleys (Ritter, xv. 369). On this height there are the ruins of a castle, of which Ibrahim Pasha still availed himself to hold the robber hordes in check, and which (according to the reports of various travellers on this yet but imperfectly known locality) bore the name of Kalaat-er Rabbad, or Rabna. The Ephraimites, charged with the occupation of the Jordan, had crossed over and seized on this important point in order fully to command the Jordan valley. Here they captured the princes "Raven and Wolf." The "Raven's-rock" was still known by this name in the time of Isaiah (see ch. x. 26);

and in the corrupted designation Rabna, a similarity of sound with Oreb or Gorab may be traced. The exploit was swift and fortunate. Gideon in his pursuit was still on this side of the Jordan; while he was making a halt before crossing over, the Ephraimites were already returning in triumph from the opposite shore, bringing with them the heads of the slain princes. All other explanations, as found among others in Bertheau and Keil also, fail to harmonize satisfactorily with the connection. The narrator designedly adds the words "from beyond Jordan," that the reader may know that Ephraim had gained the great triumph, before Gideon could so much as cross the river. This passing remark helps to prepare the reader for the opening narrative of ch. viii. It foreshadows the pride and selfishness of Ephraim. Finally, that Ephraim was beyond the Jordan, and there captured the hostile chieftains, is evident even from the words (ver. 25), "they pursued Midian;" for as they held the Jordan and "the waters," they could only pursue those who had passed the river.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

After his first victory over idolatry in his father's house, Gideon has courage for the second, over enemies in the field. He seeks the few, not the many. He knows that help comes from God, not from the multitude; and because he knows this, he conquers. The countless host of enemies vanishes like dust — not because of his three hundred: the terrors of God dissolve them, and turn them against each other. Doubtless, Gideon was also a hero of the sword; but first God's deed — then man's. Therefore he succeeds in everything, from first to last. Gideon is not envious of God, as Ephraim is of him. To God belongs the glory, first and last.

[BP. HALL: Now, when we would look that Gideon should give charge of whetting their swords, and sharpening their spears, and fitting their armor, he only gives order for empty pitchers, and lights, and trumpets. The cracking of these pitchers shall break in pieces this Midianitish clay; the kindling of these lights shall extinguish the light of Midian; these trumpets sound no other than a soul-peal to all the host of Midian: there shall need nothing but noise and light to confound this innumerable army. And if the pitchers, and brands, and trumpets of Gideon, did so daunt and dismay the proud troops of Midian and Amalek, who can we think shall be able to stand before the last terror, wherein the trumpet of the archangel shall sound, and the heavens shall pass away with a noise, and the elements shall be on a flame about our ears? — THE SAME: Those two and twenty thousand Israelites that slipped away for fear, when the fearful Midianites fled, can pursue and kill them, and can follow them at the heels, whom they durst not look at in the face. Our flight gives advantage to the feeblest adversary, whereas our resistance foilth the greatest. — SCOTT: In this world, the wicked are often left under the power of their own delusions and the fury of their mad passions, to avenge the cause of God on each other: a period is approaching, when we may expect that the persecuting foes of Christianity will destroy one another, whilst the host of Israel shall look on, and have nothing to do but to blow the trumpet of the gospel. — WORDSWORTH: Gideon has only three hundred men, and Christ's church is called "a little flock," and their foes are innumerable; but their

<sup>1</sup> A place of this name occurs in Carinthia as early as the eleventh century (Förstemann, ii. 768).

countless myriads melt away, dispersed by the breath of God.—THE SAME: The princes of Midian represent the spiritual enemies of the Church. Is it by chance that they were called Oreb, the Raven, and Zeeb, the Wolf? The Raven is contrasted with the Dove in the history of the Flood (see Gen. viii. 7) as an unclean bird (cf. Lev. xi. 15); and in the N. T. the Wolf is the emblem of those false

teachers who tear and devour the flock of Christ.—THEODORET (as quoted by Wordsworth): Gideon overcame Midian with unarmed soldiers, bearing only trumpets, torches, and pitchers. So Christ overcame the world by unarmed apostles, bearing the trumpet of preaching and the torch of miracles.—TR.]

### *Ephraim's proud complaint and Gideon's wise forbearance.*

#### CHAPTER VIII. 1-3.

- 1 And the men of Ephraim said unto him, Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not when [didst not call out<sup>1</sup> to us that] thou wentest [wast going] to fight with [against] the Midianites? and they did chide [quarrel] with him sharply  
2 [vehemently]. And he said unto them, What have I done now in comparison of you? *Is* not the gleaning of the grapes [omit: of the grapes] of Ephraim better  
3 than the vintage of Abi-ezer? God hath delivered into your hands<sup>2</sup> the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb: and what was I able to do in comparison of you? Then their anger [excitement]<sup>3</sup> was [omit: was] abated toward [against] him, when he had [omit: had] said that.

#### TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

1 Ver. 1. — לִבְלֹתִי הָרְאוּרֹת לָנוּ פִּי הַלֵּבֶתָּהּ. It is not necessary to take פִּי in a temporal sense, which at all events it has very seldom. The הָרְאוּרֹת is followed by the objective clause of *that* which the persons addressed are notified of.

[2 Ver. 3. — "Into your hands," with emphasis. Hence the Hebrew puts it first: "Into your hands (lit. hand) God gave the princes of Midian," etc. — TR.]

3 Ver. 3. — רָפוּתָהּ רָחוּם, like רָפוּתָהּ נָחָם, Ps. xxxvii. 8. רָחוּם denotes violent, panting excitement

#### EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

In his dealing with puffed-up Ephraim, even more than by his victories, Gideon approves himself as a true warrior of God, wiser in his humility than his dazzled countrymen in their pride. The service rendered by Ephraim in slaying Oreb and Zeeb, was after all of but secondary merit. They had only smitten an already shattered and terrified enemy: had only captured the game which another had chased into their hands. Where was Ephraim when Midian in full force encamped himself in the country? But inferior merit is the more arrogant. The tribe is so intoxicated by the easy victory over the two princes, that it presumes to reprimand Gideon for beginning a war without them, and thus undertaking to deprive them of the laurels which they would certainly have won. So little does Ephraim understand the true strength with which Israel has conquered, that he accounts it an insult to himself on the part of the smaller tribe to have conquered without him. The pride of the mighty men of the world could not be more clearly depicted. They contend with him vehemently (פָּרִיזָהּ), just as the men of Nineveh, repenting, "ery vehemently" (פָּרִיזָהּ, Jon. iii. 8) unto God. They address the great hero fiercely and vociferously. His answer is admirable. He might have humbled them by a few words about

his deed; but he will have no strife where Israel needs unity. He says nothing of his own great victory. He does not irritate them by referring to their previous inactivity, although their tribe was so great; or by reminding them that after all he had sent them the word which enabled them to capture an enemy whom he was pursuing. On the contrary, he quiets them by extolling their great merits. He may not conceal that the victory was gained without them; but, his vintage, is it not less than their gleanings? What comparison is there between his spoils and theirs? He, still on this side the Jordan; they, already adorned with the trophies of the "Raven and Wolf!" He lets them know, however, who it is that really gives victory, namely Elohim. But here also the nice discrimination shows itself, with which the terms Jehovah, ha-Elohim, and Elohim alternate, according to the spiritual position of the persons addressed or spoken of. To Ephraim, Gideon says that Elohim gave them victory — as he sometimes gives it even to heathen. He uses this term because they lacked humility and faith to know that Jehovah, ha-Elohim, the true God of Israel, gives strength to his people, and that, thus endowed, it is of no consequence whether the militant tribe be great or small (cf. ver. 6, etc.).

What have I done now in comparison with you? The vain tribe, which only smarted at the thought that an insignificant member of Manasse

should reap greater glory than Ephraim, is quieted when this person himself disclaims the glory. Vanity that prides itself on seeming merits, is always contracted. The Ephraimites do not understand the modesty of Gideon, which, in denying, as it were, his own real merits, necessarily pours the contempt of irony on their pretended deserts. But Gideon's object is gained. They allow themselves to be pacified, and go home to bask themselves in the sunshine of their achievements. Gideon, for his part, teaches that victory alone does not suffice to save a people; but that he is the real hero who is truly humble, and for the sake of peace overcomes himself. To conquer, he must know how to bend.

The narrative stands here in its proper place. It does not presuppose anything that happened later; but connects, historically and morally, what goes before and what follows after. Gideon is still in the midst of his campaign, when Ephraim attacks him with its pride. But his subsequent career of victory, speaks louder than envy. The statement of Josephus (*Ant.* v. 6, 6), that Ephraim was afterwards punished for its pride, rests on no Scriptural authority; but the confusion to which they are put by the subsequent deeds of Gideon, to whom after all they were indebted for their own achievement also, is a discipline of the sharpest kind.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Ephraim is jealous of Gideon. Jealousy is a quality which only seeks its own. It is a characteristic of unbelief, which envies God his power and love.

STARKE: He acts wisely, who prefers to forego somewhat of his own rights, rather than by a contrary course to invite the opposition of others, and so debar himself from attaining a greater good. —

GERLACH: Gideon's answer, as modest as it was prudent, quiets the Ephraimites. He appears here, as afterwards, as a high-minded man, free from low ambition and domineering tendencies.

[BR. HALL: I did not hear the Ephraimites offering themselves into the front of the army before the fight, and now they are ready to fight with Gideon because they were not called to fight with Midian: I hear them expostulating after it. After the exploit done, cowards are valiant. Their quarrel was, that they were not called. It had been a greater praise of their valor to have gone unbidden. . . . None speak so big in the end of the fray as the fearfullest. — THE SAME: Ephraim flies upon Gideon, whilst the Midianites fly from him; when Gideon should be pursuing his enemies, he is pursued by brethren, and now is glad to spend that wind in pacifying of his own, which should have been bestowed in the slaughter of a common adversary. It is a wonder if Satan suffer us to be quiet at home, whilst we are exercised with wars abroad. Had not Gideon learned to speak fair, as well as to smite, he had found work enough from the swords of Joseph's sons; his good words are as victorious as his sword; his pacification of friends, better than his execution of enemies. — SCOTT: In those things which pertain to the truth, authority, and glory of God, Christians should be unmoved as the sturdy oak; but in the little concerns of their own interest or reputation, they should resemble the pliant willow, that yields to every gust. — HENRY: Very great and good men must expect to have their patience tried, by the unkindnesses and follies even of those they serve, and must not think it strange. — BUSH: The incidents mentioned afford a striking illustration of two emphatic declarations of Scripture: 1. That "only by pride cometh contention;" and, 2. That "for every right work a man is envied of his neighbor." — TR.]

*Succoth and Penuel refuse supplies to Gideon while in pursuit of the Midianitish kings. The kings surprised and captured. The punishment of the traitorous cities and the captured kings.*

#### CHAPTER VIII. 4-21.

4 And Gideon came to [the] Jordan, *and* passed over, he, and the three hundred  
5 men that *were* with him, faint [hungry], yet pursuing *them* [omit: them]. And he  
said unto the men of Succoth, Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people  
6 that follow me: for they *be* faint [hungry], and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zal-  
7 munna, kings of Midian. And the princes of Succoth said, *Are* the hands of Zebah  
and Zalmunna now [already] in thine hand,<sup>1</sup> that we should give bread unto thine  
8 army? And Gideon said, Therefore when the Lord [Jehovah] hath delivered  
Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, then I will tear [thresh] your flesh with the  
9 [omit: the] thorns of the wilderness and with briers. And he went up thence to  
Pennel, and spake unto them likewise: and the men of Penuel answered him as  
10 the men of Succoth had answered *him*. And he spake also unto the men of  
Penuel, saying, When I come again [return] in peace, I will break [tear] down  
11 this tower. Now Zebah and Zalmunna *were* in Karkor, and their hosts [host]<sup>2</sup>  
with them, about fifteen thousand *men*, all that were left of all the hosts [host] of  
the children [sons] of the east: for [and] there fell [had fallen] an hundred and

11 twenty thousand men that drew sword. And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwelt [dwell] in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and smote the host.  
 12 for [while] the host was [thought itself] secure. And when [omit: when] Zebah and Zalmunna fled, [and] he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian.  
 13 Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited [terrified] all the host. And Gideon the son of Joash returned from [the] battle [war] before the sun *was up* [from the Ascent of the Sun].<sup>3</sup> And [he] caught a young man [a boy] of the men of Succoth, and inquired of him: and he described unto [wrote down for] him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof, *even* threescore and seventeen men. And he came unto the men of Succoth, and said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, with [as to] whom ye did upbraid [mock] me, saying, *Are* the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now [already] in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thy men *that are* weary [hungry]? And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness, and briers, and with them he taught [gave a lesson to] the men of Succoth. And he beat [tore] down the tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city. Then said he [And he said] unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men *were they* whom ye slew at Tabor? And they answered, As thou *art*, so *were* they; each one resembled [looked like] the children [sons] of a king. And he said, *They were* my brethren, *even* the sons of my mother: *as* the Lord [Jehovah] liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you. And he said unto Jether his first-born, Up, *and* slay them. But the youth [boy] drew not his sword: for he feared,  
 21 because [for] he *was* yet a youth [boy]. Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou, and fall upon [strike] us: for as the man *is*, so *is* his strength. And Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments [moons] that *were* on their camels' necks.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 6. — Dr. Cassel: "Hast thou the fist of Zebah and Zalmunna already in thy hand," etc. Bertheau and Keil, in their commentaries, have the same rendering, merely changing Luther's plural, *Sind die Fäuste*, to the singular.

פֶּסֶחַ is properly the hollow hand, the palm; accordingly the Dutch Version renders, rather awkwardly to be sure, "Is dan the handpalm van Zebah en Zalmunna alreeds in uwe hand," etc. The word "fist," even if it did not somewhat alter the metaphor involved, lacks dignity in modern English, although it avoids the tameness of using "hand" twice. For an independent version, De Wette's would be better: "Hast thou then Zebah and Zalmunna already in thy hand," etc. — Ta.]

[2 Ver. 10. — פְּנֵל: singular, with plural suffix. Cf. Ges. Gram. Sect. 93, 9. — Ta.]

[3 Ver. 13. — מִן הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ. The above rendering takes no account of the מִן. "At" would be better than "from." It is literally, "from at" the ascent of the sun. It indicates the point to which Gideon came, and at which he turned back. — Ta.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 4-9. And Gideon came to the Jordan. The pride of Ephraim was not the only incident by which Gideon was taught that the liberation of his people required more than victory over its enemies: that its servitude consisted not merely in external subjection, but much more in the internal bondage of sin and unbelief. Gideon also experiences the truth, which the political history of all ages demonstrates, that the friends of the people and its true interests, do not always find their natural supporters in the people itself. Instead of confederates, they find obstructors and opponents. Was not Gideon's a national achievement, for the freedom and happiness of all? Is it not for all that he risks his life? For whom does he wage war even to extermination with Midian, but for all Israel? Was it anything unreasonable, that he asked Succoth, a considerable city, for some bread for the men who, notwithstanding the many hardships endured, had not ceased to follow their enthusiastic leader? — The Septuagint justly puts ὡδυνῶντες, hungry, for ἡσυχῶντες. The same word

(הָיָה) is used by Esau, when he returns from the chase, and sees the dish of lentiles (Gen. xxv. 30). Had the men been wearied, they could not have prosecuted the pursuit. But nutritious food would strengthen them. For that they longed. The term is not specific, like רָחַב, but signifies need of physical nourishment. It includes thirst as well as hunger (cf. Job xxii. 7). — But what did Succoth? Instead of compassion and patriotic sympathy, it consulted its own petty interests. Succoth believed not; nor, consequently, saw God's hand in Gideon's victories. Materialism, which rather than risk a loss, will serve a foreign tyrant, is here depicted to the life. The magistracy of Succoth consider, not the duty to assist, but the danger which may result from such a siding with Gideon as would be implied in rendering him aid. For, not to mention that a quantity of bread costs something — and it is noticeable that while Gideon modestly intercedes for his "followers" (פְּרָסָה) they talk of his band as a host (לִיבְנֵי־אִדֹּר). — there is a chance that Gideon may fail in his expedition



Zebah and Zalmunna may possibly conquer and take vengeance. So do slaves speculate. Not so thought the German cities in 1813, when, driven by the hand of God, Napoleon fled from Russia; a disposition which, in spite of Davoust and Vandamme, brought victory to those cities. "Hast thou," they ask mockingly, "the fist of the kings already in thy hand?" The full hand, כַּף, must be seized, in order to apply the fetters to captives.

This is the second time that Gideon encounters such folly among his people. But he instantly perceives that humility and gentleness like those shown towards Ephraim, would here be out of place. Ephraim had at all events done something, and had not refused assistance. Here were cowardice and treason combined. He does not, however, chastise them at once. Therein also he shows a soul penetrated by spiritual strength. He will not manifest personal resentment; he will show them that they have offended against the cause of God. He is sure of victory; but before he punishes them, they shall see that finished, the accomplishment of which they now doubt. When he shall appear before Succoth with Zebah and Zalmunna in fetters, they will no doubt be glad to give him bread; but then he will give them that to which now on his king-chase through the desert they refer him—he will thresh them with "thorns of the desert and with *barkanim*." Owing to the brevity of the narrative, which only gives the leading speeches, while it omits all transitions, it is not altogether clear why Gideon's threat against the inhabitants of Succoth takes the precise form of "thorns." The ingenious Kimchi thought that it was a play on the name of the city, since שֻׁכָּה

(by the constant Chaldee substitution of ש for ס, שֻׁכָּה, plur. שֻׁכֹּת) means a thorn (Job xl. 31; cf. שֻׁךְ, plural שֻׁכִּים). He even thinks that the name of the city may perhaps have been derived from this word. But, though such a word-play might not have been altogether at variance with the spirit of antiquity, it can scarcely be supposed to have such controlling influence in our passage.

For then why is not the word שֻׁכָּה used by Gideon? But instead of it, other and rather remote terms are chosen. The choice of the punishment denounced seems to have a deeper reason. The magistracy of Succoth refuses bread: is not that of itself a mocking reference to the food which the desert affords? But what does Gideon find there? That which can nourish, not men, but at best only the camel, that marvel of the desert—acacia-thorns, thistles, tarfia-needles, springing up amid sand and rock. Shall he thresh these like grain, in order to bake bread? He requites their mockery, by promising with such thorns to belabor their flesh. Hence, the most probable explanation of

כִּשְׁבֵּי בָשָׁלוֹם will continue to be that, which, after the constant exegetical tradition of the Jews, makes it thistles or thorns (Raschi explains it by the French *ronces*, briers), and the same as those already indicated by "thorns of the desert." The idea suggests itself that *kotse hamidbar* may only precede *barkanim* by way of explanation; in which case בָּשָׁלוֹם would have the sense of "namely:" "thorns

of the desert, namely *barkanim*."<sup>1</sup> For that *Barka* (Barca) designates stony *syrtes*, may be considered as made out (see on ch. i. 4). The thorns meant are probably those of the acacia, called *talh* by the Arabs, which cover the ground to such an extent, that many Arabs are accustomed to carry *thorn-extractors* about them (cf. Ritter, xiv. 207, 336).

That the threatened chastisement corresponds to the expressions made use of by the ungrateful citizens in reply to Gideon's request, is evident from the fact that, though he receives the same treatment from the inhabitants of Penuel, he does not threaten them with the same punishment. These, who deemed themselves secure in their tower, he promises to tear down that bulwark of their pride.

כִּשְׁבֵּי בָשָׁלוֹם: not exactly, when I return in peace; but, when I return prosperously, with success and victory.

Vers. 10-12. And Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor. We are yet to trace the course of Gideon's pursuit. Succoth lay beyond the Jordan, for he came to it after crossing the river (ver. 4; cf. Josh. xiii. 27). It was, moreover, south of the Jabbok (*Zerka*), for the scene of Jacob's wrestling was north of that stream, he alone having remained behind, while his people had crossed over (Gen. xxxii. 23, 24). The place of the wrestling was afterwards occupied by Penuel. When morning had come, Jacob passed over the stream at Penuel (Gen. xxxii. 31), joined his family, met Esau, and afterwards came to Succoth, which was therefore south of the Jabbok. This position of Succoth agrees with that in which we left Gideon at his meeting with Ephraim. That tribe had guarded the Wady el Faria and the fords in its neighborhood. It was in the vicinity of this Wady that they met with Gideon, prosecuting the pursuit, and brought him the heads of the captured princes. Now, if he passed over at this point, he would land south of the Jabbok, and reach Succoth first. He then crossed the Jabbok, and came to Penuel. The hiding-place of the terrified enemy was no secret to him. There is in Hauran an almost unassailable place of refuge for the robber tribes—the volcanic rock-desert of Sâfa (both in the wider and narrower sense), concerning which some very valuable information is given by Wetzstein. It embraces a fertile district, "a Rubbeh, Paradise," for some months of the year, which is almost as inaccessible as Paradise. Says Wetzstein (*Hauran*, p. 15, etc.): "Here is the stronghold of the Gêjât, and Stâye, and all the tribes of the eastern slope of the Hauran mountains." The people of Syria have a proverbial expression which says, "he fled into the Wa'r of the Sâfa," i. e., into an unassailable refuge. The Rubbeh can only be reached by two roads, from the north and the south. The northern is especially dangerous; even in our own days hostile tribes have made inroads at Rigin el Mara. The Sâfa, and the whole of this terrible, rock-walled asylum, is what we are

here to understand by the term כִּרְקֹר, Karkor. For this word signifies ruins, destruction: cf. Num. xxiv. 17: "he destroys — כִּרְקֹר — all the sons of Sheth." The same verb is used, Is. xxii. 5, of the destruction of walls; and in Talmudic as well as modern Hebrew כִּרְקֹר means destruction.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Analogies to this word, such as *páxos*, thorn = *Spáxos* (cf. *πάσις* and *βραδινός*, *μίγος* and *frigus*), cannot here be further investigated. In Scandinavian dialects, *rhannus*, thornbush, is called *getbark* or *geitbark*.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius (*Onomast.*, Perthey, p. 252) does not say that this Karkor and Carcaria near Petra are one and the same place. Nor can they be the same, although the name may be similarly explained.



Such being the situation and topography of the place, the significance of the brief statement that the kings were in Karkor, becomes manifest. It not only explains the sense of security felt by the enemy, but also and especially displays the boldness, endurance, wisdom, and energy, with which Gideon followed them into their hiding-place. We can still trace his route; for it passed to the east of Nobah and Jogbehah. Nobah is the same as Kenath (Num. xxxii. 42), which again is the Kanatha of Roman times, and the Kanvât of the present. He who is north of the Jabbok, and passes east of Kanvât, if he be in search of an enemy retired to his hiding-place, must be bound for the Sâfa. But Jogbehah also can be identified. Since Gideon's way is said to have gone to the east of "Nobah and Jogbehah,"<sup>1</sup> the latter must have lain farther north than the other, and there is thus the more reason for regarding it as the same with Johbah, the Shôbah of Seetzen, Shuhubah of Buckingham (cf. Ritter, xv. 881), and Shubbah of Wetzstein.

Gideon's attack was so unexpected and sudden, that a renewed attempt at flight fails (ver. 12).

The host, it is said, תִּירָדָה : terror seized it, so that no resistance was offered, and the army surrendered. The celerity of this victorious career, and its results, finds many parallels in the history of the desert tribes. When Mehemet Ali, in 1815, fought against Asyr in Arabia, he pursued the defeated enemy with such haste, that all his stores of subsistence had to be left behind, and he himself was at last reduced to a diet of dates. But he was rewarded for this by the capture of the chiefs of his adversaries, and many others went over to him (cf. Ritter, xii. 932). But that for which no parallels can be adduced, is Gideon's aim, his cause for war, and the fervency of his enthusiastic warriors compared with the overwhelming numbers arrayed against him to the last. Even if the 120,000, lost by Midian in the course of their defeat, from the Hill of Moreh to Karkor, were a round number, a stream of blood nevertheless marked the track of the smitten tyrants, as it marked that of Napoleon's retreat from Russia. It was probably from prisoners and wounded left behind, at Stations of Death, that Gideon learned the secret way into the rocky asylum, called "hell" by Arabic poets, on account of its volcanic formations, and now become a place of judgment for a seven years' oppression (ch. vi. 1; compare the period of 1806-1813 in German history).

Vers. 13-17. And Gideon, the son of Joash, returned from the war from the Ascent of the Sun. The addition Son of Joash, is here put to Gideon's name for the first time since his rising against idolatry. The glory of having finished the conflict, accrues to the family and name of Joash, because in the hour of danger he had sided with his son. For that the conflict is ended, was already indicated by ver. 10, which said that "all that were left" of the "whole host" were in Karkor. The victory over this remnant ended, not merely a battle, but הַמִּלְחָמָה, the war. The hero can now turn back, but not yet to his own house. He must first settle accounts with Succoth and Peniel. He comes to Succoth first. Had he returned the way he went, he must have reached Peniel first.

<sup>1</sup> Greek texts have a corrupt form Ἰεγυδα. The Syrian version of Paul of Tella does not have the name at all (Rörsam, p. 169).

<sup>2</sup> For which the Jewish expositors decide, because they assign the previous expedition to the night-time.

His design was evidently to surprise both places, but chiefly Succoth, so that when he came to punish, the scourge might fall only on the persons who had deserved it. Bearing this in mind, the connection makes it clear that מַלְמַח הַחֶרֶס is not to be taken as a note of time,<sup>2</sup> sunrise, but of locality. It is designed to explain how Gideon comes to reach Succoth first, and from a direction from which the inhabitants did not expect him. Gideon everywhere displays that great quality of a general, the skill to baffle the calculations of his adversary. What sort of a locality "Maaleh Hacheres" was, the following hypothesis may perhaps indicate with some degree of probability. Succoth lay in the valley of the Jordan, the Ghor, עֲמֻקָּה

(Josh. xiii. 27). The expression מַלְמַח הַחֶרֶס can only be used in connection with mountains (cf. "Maaleh Akabbim," ch. i. 36). The heights from which Gideon descended in order to reach Succoth, were the mountains east of the Jordan, which unfortunately are yet too little known. About the names, also, which in earlier and later periods they bore, we are very much in the dark. Now, in the territory of Reuben, we find (Josh. xiii. 19) a "Tsereth Hashachar on the Mountain of the Valley." The name חֶרֶס signifies the sun. "Sunrise" (מִזְרָח) always indicates the east side. Accordingly, in the passage just cited, we have a Tsereth Hashachar, i. e., "Splendor of the Dawn," on the mountains of the Ghor, in the east. It may therefore be assumed with great probability that the name "Ascent of the Sun" also was borne by the heights of the mountains east of the Jordan, whether those mountains were named "Sun" or "Sunrise" on local, or what is more probable on religious grounds.

As Gideon appeared quite unexpectedly, he succeeded in laying hold, unnoticed, of a boy, who wrote down for him the names of those who composed the magistracy of the city. It is not without interest to observe that the boy (נַעֲרָה) could write, that he knew the names of the authorities, and that these numbered seven and seventy, of whom seven or five may be regarded as שְׂרָיִם, princes, and seventy or seventy-two as elders. If the government of the city was in the hands of certain families, the boy would not find it difficult to give their names. The astonishment and terror of the inhabitants were doubtless great. The more haughty they had formerly been, the more terrified were they now. It is to be carefully noted that Gideon's purpose is to punish only the rulers of Succoth, and that after he has done it, the remark is made : וַיִּדַּע אֶת אֲנָשֵׁי כְפֹתָה — "he taught the men of Succoth a lesson." This alone shows that the reading וַיִּדַּשׁ "he threshed," already proposed by Serarius, and again by Bertheau, is not to be approved. For the fact that "he took the elders of the city and the thorns," makes it clear that he cannot have chastised the people of Succoth. But he "made them" — the whole people, — to know ; " gave them a lesson which showed how badly their rulers had acted, and what penalties such distrust and selfishness

<sup>3</sup> That וַיִּדַּע need not necessarily be written וַיִּדַּשׁ (Bertheau), and is found elsewhere, has already been justly remarked by Keil, who refers to Num. xvi. 5, and Job xxxii. 7.

entail (which has been well apprehended by the Jewish expositors). At Penueh, however, which, having heard of the visitation of Succoth, had the folly to defend itself, the traitors lost their lives. It is truly admirable, how finely the narrative, with all its plainness, brings out the specially decisive points of view. Gideon went first to Succoth, because he did not wish to punish all the inhabitants, and it became necessary therefore to surprise the city, lest the guilty should escape, and to "catch a boy," who unreservedly gives him their names. His purpose as to Penueh requires no surprise—the tower cannot run away; and it is the folly of the inhabitants, that in defending it, they lose their lives as well as their tower.

Vers. 18-21. And he said to Zebah and Zalmunna. This took place on his arrival at home, i. e. in Israel, for his son Jether was present, who, being but a boy, cannot have shared in the heroic expedition. The place cannot, however, be definitely determined; perhaps it was his old battlefield, the plain of Jezreel, where the people came flocking together, in order to behold the terrible kings in fetters.

The closing scene of Gideon's dealings with these robber-kings, like every other in his history, is worthy of a hero who has been raised up to battle with the sword and mete out punishment. To spare the lives of enemies, especially of enemies so barbarous and cruel as these, was not the custom of antiquity, least of all in the east. Pyrrhus (in Seneca) says: *Lex nulla capto parcat ut penam impedit*; and even Josephus (*Ant.* ix. 4, 3) makes Elisha say—what, however, he never did say—that it is right to kill captives taken in a just war. But Gideon, who respects the royalty of his captives, enemies though they be, would gladly spare them, and believes himself obliged at least to show them why he cannot do it. Through this circumstance, we hear of an occurrence otherwise unknown—a fact which may suggest and cause us to regret how much other information has perhaps failed to reach us. The kings, it seems, had caught and slain on Mount Tabor the brothers of Gideon, sons of the same mother<sup>2</sup> as well as father with himself. It is probable that this took place after some earlier battle, engaged in by Manasseh—but without God's help—against the invaders. They were put to death, though only engaged in defending their native land, and though—as Zebah and Zalmunna flatteringly say—they looked like Gideon, like men of royal blood. In their persons, therefore, "kingly bearing," stately presence and chivalrous valor, had not been respected; and shall Gideon spare those who were robbers and murderers of seven years' standing? Impossible! Gideon's sword has been whetted for the very purpose of administering righteous judgment. When Turnus entreated Æneas for his life, the latter, remembering that the former had slain Pallas, the son of Evander, and "*furiis arcensius et ira terribilis*," exclaimed, "*Pallas te immolat*," etc., and thrust the spear into his heart (*Æneid*, xii. 949). And yet Turnus was a native of the country, and fought against aliens, and Pallas was neither son nor

brother of Æneas. The intimation that the family of Joash had previously already bled for Israel, throws a new light on the question why of all men Gideon was selected to be the conqueror. However, notwithstanding their ill deserts, he does not treat his captives cruelly. He neither makes them objects of taunt or insult, nor uses them for purposes of ostentation and self-glorification. He does not load them with ignominy, as Sapor is said to have done to the Roman Emperor Valerian, and, according to the legend in Eutychius, Galerius to a Sapor, and Tamerlane to Bajazet.<sup>3</sup> The honor of the captives was sufficiently consulted, even when Gideon wished to make his eldest son the executor of his sentence. But he, a boy, and apparently of timid bearing, shrinks from drawing his sword against the mighty foemen, still distinguished by royal state and show. And truly, they must have been terrible warriors; they ask not for life, as Turnus and Homeric warriors do, but desire to be slain by the hand of an equal, and not to be hacked and hewn by the sword of a boy; for, say they, "as the man, so is his strength." They have no other request to make than that Gideon will kill them himself; and he complies with it—they fall by his sword. The "moons" which have hitherto ornamented their camels' necks, he now takes off; an evidence that even in captivity they have experienced kingly treatment. That he does not take them off until after the kings are dead, indicates that they are the special insignia of royalty, and crescent-shaped. Thus, according to Philostratus (lib. ii. cap. 1), Apollonius of Tyana received the convoy of a camel from the Persian king, which headed the train, and by a golden ornament on its face indicated its royal ownership. In the poem of Statius (cf. Bochart, *Hieroicoicon*, i. 17) the horse of Parthenopæus, the fabled assailant of Thebes, wears crescent-shaped ornaments (*lunata monilia*). Mention is made of an Arabic expression, which speaks of "moon-shaped camel ornaments" (Ritter, xii. 486). The ornament, in its peculiar shape, was evidently an escentheon of the ancient Ishmaelites, who were worshippers of the moon (Herod. iii. 8), as Scripture also speaks of a son of Joktan, the progenitor of many Arab tribes, whose name was Jerah, moon (Gen. x. 26). The crescent of the Arabizing Ottomans of modern times may be referred to it as to its original. For the *lunule* also, which adorned the shoes of ancient Roman senators and nobles, and whose significance was obscure even to antiquity (Plut. *Quest. Rom.*, 73), had only the shape of the half-moon.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

[HENRY: "Faint and yet pursuing;" much fatigued with what they had done, yet eager to do more. Our spiritual warfare must thus be prosecuted with what strength we have, though but little; it is many a time the true Christian's case, fainting, yet pursuing.—BR. HALL: It is hard if those who fight the wars of God may not have necessary relief; that whilst the enemy dies by them, they

1 Cf. Grotius, *De Jure Pacis et Belli*, lib. iii. 4, 10.

2 (Buns): "In countries where polygamy is tolerated, the ties of brotherhood are, as might be expected, much more close and tender between those who are born of the same mother, than those who are connected only as the children of the same father. This explains why 'son of my mother' was among the Hebrews, as now among the Arabs and others, a far more endearing expression than that of 'my brother,' in the general sense." The same remarks hold

also of the tribes of Western Africa. Speaking of polygamy and family life among them, the Rev. J. G. Auer observes (*Spirit of Missions* for 1857, p. 729): "Children cleave to their mother more than to their father, and a full brother or sister is called 'my mother's child.'" —TR.]

3 [On the first of these stories, see Gibbon's *Decline*, etc. Milman's ed., Boston, i. 319; on the second, vol. vi. 271 note 58; on the third, vi. 267-71, with Milman's note on p. 271. —TR.]

should die by famine. If they had labored for God at home in peace, they had been worthy of maintenance; how much more now that danger is added to their toil!—THE SAME: Those that fight for our souls against spiritual powers, may challenge bread from us; and it is shameful unthankfulness to deny it.

THE SAME (on the punishment of Succoth): I know not whether more to commend Gideon's wisdom and moderation in the proceedings, than his resolution and justice in the execution of this business. I do not see him run furiously into the city, and kill the next; his sword has not been so drunken with blood, that it should know no difference; but he writes down the names of the princes, and singles them forth for revenge.—THE SAME: It is like, the citizens of Succoth would have been glad to succor Gideon, if their rulers had not forbidden. They must therefore escape, while their princes perish.—THE SAME (on Penuel): The place where Jacob wrestled with God and prevailed,

now hath wrestled against God and takes a fall they see God avenged, which would not believe Him delivering.—WORDSWORTH: They who now despise the mercy of Christ as the Lamb, will hereafter feel the wrath of Christ as the Lion (Rev. v. 5).—BUSH: The whole of this remarkable transaction tends to inspire us with confidence in God, and to encourage our exertions in his cause; but there are two lessons especially which we shall do well to learn from it: 1. To prosecute our spiritual warfare under all discouragements ourselves; and 2. To be careful to put no discouragements in the way of others. God is indignant with those who would weaken the hands of his people.

BP. HALL: The slaughter of Gideon's brethren was not the greatest sin of the Midianitish kings; [yet] this alone shall kill them, when the rest [of their sins] expected an unjust remission. How many lewd men hath God paid with some one sin for all the rest!—SCOTT: Sins long forgotten must be accounted for to God.—TR.]

*Gideon refuses to be king. Prepares an ephod, which is followed by evil consequences. Gideon's death and burial.*

## CHAPTER VIII. 22-32.

- 22 Then [And] the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and  
thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Mid-  
23 ian. And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son  
24 rule over you: the Lord [Jehovah] shall rule over you. And Gideon said unto  
them, I would desire a request of you, that you would give me every man the ear-  
rings [the ring]<sup>1</sup> of his prey. (For they had golden ear-rings [rings], because  
25 [for] they were Ishmaelites.) And they answered, We will willingly give *them*.  
And they spread a garment,<sup>2</sup> and did cast therein every man the ear-rings [ring]  
26 of his prey. And the weight of the golden ear-rings [rings] that he requested,  
was a thousand and seven hundred *shekels* of gold; beside [apart from] orna-  
ments [moons], and [the] collars [ear-drops], and [the] purple raiment [garments]  
that *was* [were] on the kings of Midian, and beside [apart from] the chains [col-  
27 lars] that *were* about their camels' necks. And Gideon made an ephod thereof,  
and put it in his city, *even* in Ophrah: and all Israel went thither [omit: thither]  
a whoring after it [there]: which thing [and it *i. e.* the ephod] became a snare unto  
28 Gideon, and to his house. Thus was Midian subdued [But Midian was humbled]  
before the children [sons] of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more.  
29 And the country was in quietness<sup>3</sup> forty years in the days of Gideon. And Jerub-  
30 baal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house. And Gideon had three  
31 score and ten sons of his body begotten: for he had many wives. And his concu-  
bine that *was* in Shechem, she also bare him a son, whose name he [they]<sup>4</sup> called  
32 Abimelech. And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age, and was buried  
in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 24. — *זָמָה*, ring; whether ear-ring or nose-ring, the word itself does not declare. Cassel and De Wette both render it by the singular (De Wette, *Ohrring*). It is used as a collective, and simply indicates the class of ornaments desired, without any reference to the number which each man was supposed to have, or was expected to give. This definite singular is best rendered in English by the plural, as in E. V. — TR.]

[2 Ver. 25. — *חִשְׁמֹלָה*: Dr. Cassel, *ein Gewand*, "a garment." The definite article simply indicates the garment used on the occasion. The term *חִשְׁמֹלָה*, though also used in the general sense of garment and raiment, is

specially applied to the outer garment, the mantle or cloak, cf. *Bib. Dict.*, s. v. "Dress." Being a four-cornered piece of cloth, it was quite suitable for the present purpose. — Tr.]

[3 Ver. 28. — **וַיָּשָׁב הָאָרֶץ**, "and the land rested." The E. V. departs here from its own previous renderings, see ch. iii. 11, 30; v. 31, where the Hebrew has the same words. — Tr.]

[4 Ver. 31. — **וַיִּשָּׂא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ**, Dr. Cassel: *man nannte seinen Namen*. Bertheau also takes **וַיִּשָּׂא** as the indeterminate 3d pers. (see Ges. *Gr.* 137, 3), and says: "the name sounds like a nickname, given him because his lordship was of such brief duration, and he so very far from being Father of a King." The difficulty is that the text gives no hint of a change of subject. But cf. the commentary below, and Keil's view in note on p. 140. — Tr.]

#### EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

An extraordinary victory had been gained — a triumph without a parallel. A glory surrounds Gideon in the eyes of Israel, such as had distinguished no one else within the memory of men. Who can stand beside him? How has the arrogance and vain-glory of Ephraim been put to shame! Having caught a couple of princes, already fleeing for their lives, they ceased from the conflict, though still far from finished. Gideon, whose courage began, and whose untiring energy prosecuted the war, has also finished it. He has captured and destroyed, not princes (**שָׂרִי**) merely, but — as the narrative emphatically intimates — the kings (**מְלָכִי**) themselves. And what kings! The chiefs of all Midian. Kings, therefore, whose defeat and capture was of the greatest consequence, as the narrative sufficiently indicates by the constant repetition of their names. Their names, also, like those of the "princes," are peculiar; those were borrowed from animals, these from "sacrifice" and "carved work." The latter therefore indicate perhaps the conjunction of priestly with royal authority. Nor did Gideon smite the hostile armies in his own country merely, but he ventured far into a strange land. To pursue a great army into the rock desert, and as it were drag the enemy out of his hiding-place, was an exploit of the most astounding character. Who but Gideon would have dared to enter the terrible Harra, there to seize his royal prey? Apart from this, how imposing his assurance, his wisdom, his moderation and strength! If men admired the discreteness of his answer to Ephraim, they were startled by the punishment of Succoth and Penueil, and the terrible recompense meted out to the kings. Success carries the day with the people: now surprising, grand, and dazzling was its form on this occasion! The people feel that now they have a man among them, who towers, not physically, but in soul and spirit, far above them all. No wonder that Israel, gathered from all quarters to see the hero and his captures, urgently presses him, and says: —

Ver. 22. Rule over us, thou, thy son, and thy son's son. This is the language of gratitude and admiration. Excited, and, like all multitudes, easily carried away by momentary impulses of joy and approval, they offer him the supreme authority, and even propose to make it hereditary. It is only done, however, in a storm of excitement. Nor do they propose that he shall be their **מֶלֶךְ**, but their **מֹשֵׁל** — not their King, but their Imperator. What they desire is to be not only for his honor, but also for their welfare. His family is to continue forever the champion of Israel. But in this vehement urgency of the moment, the people show how little they comprehend, notwithstanding this and many other great events of their history, to whom they are really indebted for victory. They show that

they regard the strength by which Gideon has conquered to be physical, rather than moral. Thou shalt rule, for thou hast delivered us from Midian. They fail to perceive the contradiction to which they give utterance when they talk of an hereditary "Judge," or as they word it, "ruler." It belongs to the essence of a Judge, that he be raised up by the Spirit, and filled with the strength of God. He is God's military ambassador to a people that has no king. Not the people, but God, had made Gideon what he was — their military leader and commander. His children will not be able to lead the nation, unless they also are called by God. The kingship is hereditary, because it rests on the broad basis of established order, and not merely on the endowments of extraordinary persons. The divinely inspired imperator can at most transmit only his treasures. It was not without a purpose that the narrative told of the timid boy, Jether, Gideon's first-born. Will he — if God do not call him — be able to smite the Midianites? and if he be not able, will the men of Israel obey him? None the less great, however, was the temptation for Gideon. He on whom but recently Ephraim looked superciliously down, has now the offer of dominion over Israel laid at his feet. It requires more strength to resist the allurements of proffered power, than to defeat an enemy. But Gideon is a great man, greater than Washington, to whom absolute dominion was not offered, and who accepted the Presidency because he would obey "the voice of the people," saying as he did so, that "no people could be more bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand which conducts the affairs of men, than the people of the United States" (cf. Marshall's *Life of Washington*, ii. 146).

Ver. 23. And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: Jehovah shall rule over you. God — not "Elohim," but "Jehovah," the God of Israel — is your only Imperator. With this he repels the idea that he was the sole and real conqueror, as also the supposition that any others than those whom God calls can be of service. He declares, moreover, that God must be obeyed, because He is the Ruler; and that as in this war against Midian victory was gained only because his (Gideon's) orders were followed, so victory will always be contingent on obedience to God.

With these words Gideon worthily crowns his heroic deeds; and there he should have stopped. But the moment that he connects the cause of God with a measure of his own, albeit with the best intentions, he falls into error, and without designing it leads the people astray.

Vers. 24-26. Give me, every man, the ring of his booty. Since the rings were taken from men, they must be understood to be ear-rings, the use of which, especially among the ancients, was to a great extent common to both men and women. In Ceylon and among the Burmese, the perforation of the ears is to this day, for both sexes, a religious ceremony; just as the habit of wearing rings

did not have its origin solely in desire for finery. The observations of modern travellers among the Arabs, are confined to female ornaments, but "sons" also wore such rings as are here mentioned, even among the Israelites (Ex. xxxii. 2). Plantus (*Panulus*, v. 2, 32) says jeeringly of the Carthaginians: "*Digitos in manibus non habent, quia incedunt cum annulatis auribus*" (cf. Serarius). The explanation, "they had golden rings, for they were Ishmaelites,"<sup>1</sup> is to be referred, not to the rings, but to the material of which they were made. It calls attention to the love of finery and splendor which then as now characterized the Arab tribes,<sup>2</sup> and at the same time accounts for the wealth of gold implied in the possession of so many rings of that metal by the Midianitish army. Gold is still extensively used by the Arabs for the same purposes (cf. Ritter, xiv. 415, etc.; xv. 828, etc.).

The army must have been pervaded by thorough, even though temporary, enthusiasm for their heroic leader, since they willingly gave up the most valuable part of the booty, without knowing but that he wanted it for personal use. Accordingly, an abundance of gold rings were brought together. Now, for the first time, was Israel astounded at the magnitude of the spoil; now was it seen that the man who formerly ranked his harvest second to the gleanings of Ephraim, had obtained glory and wealth beyond comparison. For not only were 1,700 shekels of gold handed over to him at this time, but to him also belonged (for ver. 26 speaks only of his possessions) the moons (ver. 21), the

נְטִיפוֹת, and the purple garments of the kings, and the decorations of their camels. The נְטִיפוֹת are ear-pendants, made of pearls and precious stones,<sup>3</sup> peculiar to their kings, in distinction from the simple rings worn by all other Midianites. The name signifies a "drop," which the pearl resembled. The Greek *σταλαγμοί*, with which Gesenius compares it, I have met with only in Plantus (*Menechmei*, iii. 3) as *stalaquima*. The monument of Cyrus was adorned with ear-pendants of precious stones (Arrian, vi. 29). Procopius represents the Persian king Peroerzes with a costly pearl hanging from his right ear (Brisson, *De Regno Pers.*, p. 83). Among the Indians, persons of distinction wore precious stones in their ears (Curtius, viii. 9, 21). In the Ramayana it is stated, that in Ayodhya no one was without ear-pendants (*akundali*) and other ornaments (Bohlen, *Ates Indien*, ii. 170). — Great wealth stood now at Gideon's command; but he had no thought of appropriating the gifts of the men of Israel to himself. All that he retained was the booty which had fallen to him from the Midianitish kings. Hannibal also, caused the rings of the Roman knights who fell at Cannæ to be collected by the

peck (Liv. xxiii. 12), — but Gideon has no Punic ends in view.

Vers. 27, 28. And Gideon made an ephod thereof.<sup>4</sup> The high-priestly significance of the ephod is clearly explained in Ex. xxviii. It is the special sacred garment, by which Aaron and his sons are distinguished as priests. With the ephod, the breastplate is connected, fastened to it by strings, and not to be displaced (Ex. xxviii. 28). This garment, with the breastplate, the high priest wears in the sanctuary. With it therefore are connected the Urim and Thummim, through which divine instructions are imparted, and to which, after the death of Moses and Joshua, Israel applies for directions. It is this high-priestly character of the ephod, and the gift of prophetic communication through the Urim and Thummim of its breastplate (cf. 1 Sam. xxx. 7), that explains the consecration of such a garment by Gideon. Its procurement is closely connected with the words: "Jehovah shall rule over you." The people has been saved by God's revelation of Himself to Gideon. To his service, therefore, the choicest of the spoil must be devoted. Not on man, but on Him, is hope to be built. He will say what the people are to do. Through the priestly ephod, the heavenly King will speak, and rule his obedient people. The consecration of the ephod, therefore, as that with which the Urim and Thummim are connected, expresses the truth that God governs; and is Gideon's declaration that He, and not any human Imperator, is to be honored.

Thus far, Gideon's action was blameless, and worthy of his faith. But he "deposited" the ephod in his city, in Ophrah.<sup>5</sup> Now, Ophrah was not the seat of the common sanctuary, the tabernacle, nor of the national priesthood. And though the priestly family of that day may have been in a decline, though the tribe of Ephraim, among whom it had at that time its principal seat, gave unequivocal evidence of unbelieving pride, on which account alone Gideon might hesitate to commit the oracle to their keeping; yet, all these reasons, however indicative of spiritual wisdom, were not sufficient to authorize the consecration of an ephod and the establishment of a priesthood, in Ophrah. It was the inauguration of a separate sanctuary, the establishment, so to speak, of an opposition ephod, under the controlling influence of Gideon. The ecclesiastical centre of Israel was thus severed from the tabernacle. The hero, notwithstanding his personal fidelity to God, evinces herein conceptions of Israel's calling too subjective to be secure against disastrous error. The result soon makes this apparent.

And all Israel went a whoring after it. The expositions of recent interpreters, who ascribe to Gideon the erection of a golden calf, are founded

1 [BERTHEAU: "Ishmaelites is the general name of a number of tribes, among whom the Midianites, though according to Gen. xxv. 2, not descended from Ishmael, but from Keturah, were also reckoned, cf. Gen. xxxvii. 25, 28; xxxix. 1." — See also above, on ch. vi. 1. — TR.]

2 [WELLSTED ("Reisen in Arabien," i. 224, quoted by Keil): — "The women in Omān squander considerable sums in the purchase of silver ornaments, and their children are literally laden with them. I have sometimes counted fifteen earrings on each side, and head, breast, arms, and ankles, were adorned with equal profusion." — TR.]

3 In Silius Italicus also (*Punica*, xii. 231), we find, "*In aure lupis, rubris adjectus ab oris.*"

4 [KEIL: "It is not necessary so to understand this, as if the 1,700 shekels (fifty lbs.) of gold were worked up into the ephod, but only that the expense of making it was

defrayed with this money." — WORDSWORTH: "The immense quantity of gold was probably bestowed not only on the robe itself, but on the chains and ouches, and settings of the stones on the shoulders, and on the breastplate, and on the setting of the stones therein; and perhaps also in the purchase of the precious stones for the shoulders, and for the workmanship of the whole." — TR.]

5 [נִצֵּב. On this word compare Keil on this passage [Keil remarks: "נִצֵּב אֵלֶיךָ" does not say, he set it up; but may as well mean, he preserved it, in his city Ophrah, נִצֵּב is nowhere used of the erection of an image or statue; and signifies, not only to place, but also to lay down (e. g. ch. vi. 37), and to let stand, leave behind, Gen. xxxiii. 15." — TR.]

n utter misapprehension. The use of rings by Aaron in casting his idol, was simply the result of his having no other gold, and has surely no tendency to establish a necessary connection between the collection of rings and the casting of golden calves. The establishment by the recreant Micah, in the closing part of our Book, of "an ephod and a graven image," is itself evidence that he who only consecrated an ephod, did not erect an image. Gideon, with the words "Jehovah shall rule!" on his lips, cannot intend to give up that for which he has risked his life — fidelity towards the God who will have no graven images. The erection of an idol image is the worst of sins. It was from that very sin that Gideon had delivered his people; he was the Contender against Baal, the destroyer of idol altars, — the man who would not even suffer himself to be made Imperator, an idol of the people. Gideon continues faithful to the moment of his death, which he reaches in a good old age. If, nevertheless, Israel goes a whoring after the ephod, this was no part of Gideon's wish; still, the snare was of his laying, because he placed the ephod "in his own house." He thought that by that means the people would better remember from what distress they had been delivered; but it is the nature of the multitude to pervert even faith into superstition. They come to Ophrah with worship and prayer for direction, because this particular ephod is there — not because they seek to honor God, but because this is Gideon's ephod. They regard not the word which issues from the breastplate to him who believes in God, but only the fact that the ephod is made of the spoils of Midian. Thus they turn Gideon's faith into superstition; and Israel's moral strength, instead of being increased, is weakened. The unwholesome desire has been excited to present worship, not in the customary place, but wherever the subjective sense of novelty allures the worshipper. If Gideon had not consecrated the ephod in his house, it had not become a snare for Israel. It helped him indeed to retain the leadership of Israel, under the supremacy of Jehovah; but by it, discarding as it did the lawful priesthood, he led the people astray into an historical subjectivism instead of establishing them in their objective faith, and thus prepared the way for apostasy. For what but apostasy could follow at his death, when the popular faith became thus connected with his person, his government, and the ephod in his house? The hero erred, when he also made himself a priest. His house fell, because he undertook to make it a temple for the people. The ephod with the breastplate became a snare, because the God of Israel is not to be led by Gideon, but Gideon by Him — even though there be no ephod in his house.<sup>1</sup>

The renewed apostasy, however, for which the way was thus prepared, manifested itself only in the sequel. As long as Gideon lived, his powerful spirit kept the enemy in fear, and the people at rest. The effects of his achievement lasted forty years, although the hero, refusing dominion, had retired as a private person to his house and stayed there, — unlike Washington, who, though at the

end of the war he returned with "inexpressible delight" to his country-seat at Mount Vernon on the Potomac, yet soon left it again, to become President of the new republic.

Vers. 29-32. And Jerubbaal, the son of Joash, went and dwelt in his own house. The surname Jerubbaal has not again called for attention, since the events which gave rise to it. But now, that Gideon's work is finished, the narrative, with a subtlety of thought that is surprising, speaks of him under this name. It was given him, because he had overthrown the altar of Baal, for which the superstitious populace expected to see the vengeance of Baal overtake him (ch. vi. 32). The result shows that Baal is nothing. Gideon has smitten him and his servants, and is covered with success and glory. "There goes" — so speak the people among themselves — "Jerubbaal into his house; the greatest man in Israel, because he smote Baal." Baal is impotent against the faithful and valiant. Victory constantly attends his enemies, for God is with them. May this truth never be forgotten by our own people and princes! As long as he continued to live, Gideon had everything that ministered to fame and happiness in Israel — many sons, peace, riches, and a "good old age." The last expression is used of no one else but Abraham (Gen. xxv. 8); for of David it is employed not by the Book of Kings, but only by the late Chronicles (1 Chron. xxix. 28). The "goodness" of his old age consisted in his seeing the blessed results of his great deed of faith, continuing unbroken and unchanged as long as he lived. Nevertheless, the narrative already hints at the shadow which after his death darkened his house. In Shechem, a concubine bore him a son, whom they called Abimelech. אֲבִימֶלֶךְ, I think, refers not to Gideon, but indefinitely to those about the concubine; for it was in Shechem that the name originated. Gideon, who would not "rule," much less be king, would not have named his son, "My Father is King." On the other hand, it was but natural that the vanity of the concubine, when she bore a son to the great Gideon, the man of royal reputation and distinction, would gladly consent to have him named Abimelech.<sup>2</sup> This vanity of Shechem is the foundation of the coming tragedy.

Of no previous hero has the account been so extended. It is even mentioned that he was buried in his father's sepulchre, in the family vault. That also is a sign of his happy and peaceful end. Here also, as always at the close, the name of the hero's father is associated with his own, as a tribute of honor for the support he once afforded his son (ch. vi. 31); beyond this, however, nothing is recorded of him. Gideon, as conqueror, dwelt no longer in his father's house, but in his own (ver. 29); but at death he is buried in his father's tomb. In that tomb, the glory of Manasseh sleeps; he in whom, tradition declares, the blessing of Jacob on this grandson was fulfilled, and of whom the Midrash says, that what Moses was at an earlier time, that Gideon was in his.

<sup>1</sup> With this explanation of the ephod and its consequences, the old Jewish expositors agree. The Midrash (*Jalkut*, ii. p. 64) gives a profound hint, when it opposes the tribe-feeling of Gideon, as a member of Manasseh, to that of Ephraim. However, even that was already regarded as a species of "unclean service."

<sup>2</sup> Keil interprets the name as meaning "Father of a King" (*Königsvater*), and says: "אֲבִימֶלֶךְ אֶת־שֵׁם הַמֶּלֶךְ הָאֵלֹהִים

is not the same as אֶת־שֵׁם הַמֶּלֶךְ, to give one a name, to name him, but signifies to give one a by-name, to surname him, cf. Neh. ix. 7; Dan. v. 12 (Chald.). It follows from this, that Gideon gave Abimelech this name as a surname suitable to his character; consequently, not at his birth, but afterwards, as he grew up and developed characteristics which suggested it." — Tr.]

## HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Gideon puts kings to flight, pursues them like wild beasts to their dens, slays them with his own hand—an honor not allowed to Barak,—but himself will be no king. Dominion belongs to God, he says; for the victory was of God. It is not majorities that make a king in Israel, but the call of God by the mouth of his prophets. What Gideon had won, was not his. How should he take God's title, to whom everything in Israel belongs? So long as we render God what belongs to Him, we shall also have what properly falls to us. When Gideon inaugurated his ephod, he desired an honor for his house; and this only honor which he sought for himself, beyond that which he already had, proved the downfall of his house after him. Let us therefore seek first the kingdom of God: all other things will come of themselves. So soon as we seek to honor and immortalize ourselves beside God, our labor proves vain, and our glory falls into the dust.

LISCO: Gideon refuses to accede to the proposal of the people, because he is conscious that everything is to be ascribed only to the Lord, and that it would be nothing else than arbitrariness and self-seeking to accept the royal dignity without special direction from above.—GERLACH: He rejects the offered crown from genuine fidelity to the Lord whom alone he serves; but another temptation he fails to withstand.

[HENRY: They honestly thought it very reasonable, that he who had gone through the toils and

perils of their deliverance, should enjoy the honor and power of commanding them ever after; and very desirable, that he who in this great and critical juncture had had such manifest tokens of God's presence with him, should ever after preside in their affairs. Let us apply it to the Lord Jesus; He hath delivered us out of the hand of our enemies, our spiritual enemies, the worst and most dangerous, therefore it is fit He should rule over us; for how can we be better ruled, than by One that appears to have so great an interest in heaven, and so great a kindness for this earth?—BR. HALL: That which others plot and sue, and swear and bribe for (dignity and superiority), he seriously rejects, whether it were for that he knew God had not yet called them to a monarchy, or rather for that he saw the crown among thorns. Why do we ambitiously affect the command of these mole-hills of earth, when wise men have refused the proffers of kingdoms? Why do we not rather labor for that kingdom which is free from all cares, from all uncertainty?

WORDSWORTH: Gideon's history is a warning that it requires more than a good intention to make a good act; and that the examples of the best of men are not a safe guide of conduct; and the better the man is, the more will be the consequences of bad acts done by him. The only right rule of life is the Law of God.—THE SAME: Gideon is numbered among the saints of God in the epistle to the Hebrews (ch. xi. 32); but the saints of God were men, and no man is free from some blemish of human infirmity.—TR.]

*Apostasy from God, and ingratitude to man.*

## CHAPTER VIII. 33-35.

- 33 And it came to pass as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children [sons] of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after [the] Baalim, and made Baal-berith  
34 their god. And the children [sons] of Israel remembered not the Lord [Jehovah] their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every  
35 side: Neither showed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, *namely*, Gideon [Jerubbaal Gideon],<sup>1</sup> according to all the goodness<sup>2</sup> which he had showed unto Israel.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 35. — The word *namely* is added by the translators, who supposed, as Bertheau does, that the writer designed more to point out the identity of Gideon with Jerubbaal. Cf. the Com. — TA.]

[2 Ver. 35. — כָּכָל-הַטּוֹבָה: Dr. Cassel: *trotz aller Wohlthat*, "notwithstanding all the good." The "notwithstanding" lies perhaps in the thought, but not in the language. — TA.]

## EXOETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Vers. 33, 34. And it came to pass as soon as Gideon was dead. The fact soon became manifest that the people had been raised only by the personal character of Gideon; he is scarcely dead, before they fall back again. The narrator says sharply וַיֵּשְׁבוּ, "they returned." The same word which elsewhere describes the turning of the people towards God, is here used to indicate their passion for sin. *Ad vomitum redierunt*, as Serarius well remarks.

And went a whoring after the Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god. Nothing could put the stupid thoughtlessness of the people in a stronger light. They have become great and free through victory over Baal; and now they again run after him. Jerubbaal—the contender with Baal—has just died, and they enter into covenant with Baal (see on ch. ix. 4). That the nations in the Baal-covenant (Baal-berith) kept the peace towards them, was because Jehovah had given them victory,—and lo! they make idols their god! The error of Gideon, in supposing that by setting up



his ephod he could preserve the people, now shows itself. Since he is dead, in whom they conceived their salvation to be personified, they think neither of the spoils out of which the ephod was made, nor of him who procured them. Ingratitude is the parent of all unbelief. Thankfulness comes from thought.<sup>1</sup> Israel thinks not on the God who has delivered it from all its enemies; how then should it think on the human hero when he has passed away. They withhold obedience from the God of their fathers; what recognition can they have for the house of their benefactor. The ephod, to be sure, was still in Ophrah; but who that despises the sanctuary of Moses and Joshua, will respect this private institute of Gideon, when his voice has ceased to be heard.

Ver. 35. Neither showed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal Gideon. In the name Jerubbaal, all the hero's meritorious service, and its great results, are enunciated. For that reason the narrator mentions it here. It serves to aggravate the sinfulness of Israel's ingratitude, and to show that he who enters the service of Baal, will also ignore his obligations towards those who contend with Baal. The people are unwilling to be reminded that to fight against Baal brings prosperity. They seek to forget everything that admonishes to repentance. It has always been the

case, that those who apostatize from God, do not do well by the "house" of God. — Notwithstanding all the benefits which he had shown unto Israel. The narrator intimates that the endeavor of Gideon to perpetuate, by means of the ephod, the religious and godly memory of his deeds, was altogether vain. For let no one imagine that where God's own deeds fail to command remembrance and gratitude, those of men, however deserving, can maintain themselves against the sinful sophistry of unbelief.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

[HENRY: Gideon being dead, the Israelites found themselves under no restraint, and went after Baalim. They went first after another ephod (ver. 27), for which Gideon had himself given them too much occasion, and now they went after another god. False worships made way for false deities. — SCOTT: As we all need so much mercy from our God, we should learn the more patiently to bear the ingratitude of our fellow-sinners, and the unsuitable returns we meet with for our poor services, and to resolve, after the divine example, "not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good." — TR.]

1 [The German is, "*Dank kommt vom Denken.*" It is interesting to observe, whether the author meant to suggest it or not, that the remark is sound etymology as well as psychology. Grimm (*Wörterb.* ii. pp. 727, 927) derives both

*dank* and *denken* from "the lost root *dinke, danc, dünken*," expressive "of an action of the mind, a movement and uplifting of the soul." *Thank* and *think* belong, of course, to the same root. — TR.]

## FIFTH SECTION.

### THE USURPED RULE OF ABIMELECH, THE FRATRICIDE AND THORN-BUSH KING.

#### *The election and coronation of Abimelech. Jotham's parable.*

#### CHAPTER IX. 1-21.

- 1 And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem unto his mother's brethren, and communed with [spake unto] them, and with [unto] all the family of the
- 2 house of his mother's father, saying, Speak. I pray you, in the ears of all the men [lords]<sup>1</sup> of Shechem, Whether [Which] is better for you, either [omit: either] that all the sons of Jerubbaal, *which are* threescore and ten persons, reign [rule] over you, or that one reign [rule] over you?<sup>2</sup> remember also that I *am* your bone and
- 3 your flesh. And his mother's brethren spake of him in the ears of all the men [lords] of Shechem all these words: and their hearts inclined to follow [inclined
- 4 after] Abimelech; for they said, He *is* our brother. And they gave him threescore and ten *pieces* of silver out of the house of Baal-berith, wherewith Abimelech
- 5 hired vain [lit. empty, i. e. loose, worthless] and light [wanton, reckless] persons, which [and they] followed him. And he went unto his father's house at Ophrah, and slew his brethren the sons of Jerubbaal, *being* threescore and ten persons, upon one stone: notwithstanding, yet [and only] Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left;
- 6 for he hid himself. And all the men [lords] of Shechem gathered together, and all the house of Millo [all Beth-millo], and went and made Abimelech king, by the
- 7 plain [oak] of the pillar [monument]<sup>3</sup> that *was* in [is near] Shechem. And when [omit: when] they told *it* to Jotham, [and] he went and stood in [on] the top of



- mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice, and cried, and said unto them, Hearken unto me, ye men [lords] of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you.<sup>4</sup> The trees went forth *on a time* to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive-tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive-tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness,<sup>5</sup> wherewith by me they honour God and man,<sup>6</sup> and go to be promoted [go to wave] over the trees? And the trees said to the fig-tree, Come thou, *and* reign over us. But the fig-tree said unto them, Should I forsake<sup>7</sup> my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted [to wave] over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, *and* reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave<sup>8</sup> my wine [must], which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted [to wave] over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble [thornbush], Come thou, *and* reign over us. And the bramble [thornbush] said unto the trees, If in truth [*i. e.* in good earnest] ye anoint me king over you, *then* come *and* put your trust [take shelter] in my shadow: and [but] if not, let fire come out of the bramble [thornbush], and devour the cedars of Lebanon. Now therefore, if ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye have made Abimelech king, and if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done unto him according to the deserving of his hands: (For my father fought for you, and adventured his life far,<sup>9</sup> and delivered you out of the hand of Midian: And ye are risen up against my father's house this day, and have slain his sons, three score and ten persons, upon one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his maid-servant, king over the men [lords] of Shechem, because he *is* your brother:) If ye then have dealt truly and sincerely with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, *then* rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you: But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men [lords] of Shechem, and the house of Millo [and Beth-millo]; and let fire come out from the men [lords] of Shechem, and from the house of Millo [from Beth-millo], and devour Abimelech. And Jotham ran away, and fled, and went to Beer, and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 2. — בְּעֵלִי: used interchangeably with אֲנָשִׁי, cf. ver. 46 with 49; 2 Sam. xxi. 12, with ii. 4, 5. See also ch. xx. 5, and Josh. xxiv. 11. Dr. Cassel: *Herrn*; De Wette, and many others, *Bürger*, "citizens." — Ta.]

[2 Ver. 2. — The E. V. unnecessarily departs from the order of the Hebrew, and thereby obscures the antithesis which is primarily between "seventy" and "one," and secondarily between "sons of Jerubbaal" and "your bone and flesh," thus: "Which is better for you, that seventy men, all sons of Jerubbaal, rule over you, or that one man rule over you? Remember, also," etc. — Ta.]

[3 Ver. 6. — KEIL: "The explanation of אֵלֶּן מִצֵּב is doubtful. מִצֵּב, anything 'set up,' is in Isa. xxix. 3 a military post [garrison], but may also mean a monument, and designates here probably the great stone set up (Josh. xxiv. 26) under the oak or terebinth near Shechem (cf. Gen. xxxv. 4)." De Wette also renders: *Denkmal-Eiche*, "monument-oak." — Ta.]

[4 Ver. 7. — Dr. Cassel translates: "and may God hear you." This is very well, but hardly in the sense in which he takes it, see below. Whether we translate as in the E. V., or as Dr. Cassel, the realization of the second member of the address must be regarded as contingent upon that of the first. — Ta.]

[5 Vers. 9, 11, 13. — הִתְחַלְלֵתִי אֶרְבִּישָׁנִי. According to Ewald (*Gram.*, 51 c.) הִתְחַלְלֵתִי is a contracted hiphal form (for הִתְחַלְלֵתִי), the second ה being dropped in order to avoid the concurrence of too many gutturals, and the resulting הִתְחַלְלֵתִי (cf. Ges. *Gr.* 22, 4) being changed into הִתְחַלְלֵתִי in order to distinguish the interrogative particle more sharply. Others regard it as hophal (see Green, 53, 2, b). But as there are no traces anywhere else of either of these conjugations in this verb, it is commonly viewed as a simple kal form = הִתְחַלְלֵתִי. Keil seeks to explain the anomalous vowel under ח by saying that "the obscure o-sound is substituted for the regular a in order to facilitate the pronunciation of successive guttural syllables." Dr. Cassel renders: "Have I then lost [better: given up] my fatness?" But as the notion of futurity must manifestly be contained in the following וְהִלֵּכְתָּ, the ordinary rendering, "Should I give up?" is preferable. — Ta.]

[6 Ver. 9. — וְאֲנָשִׁים וְאֱלֹהִים יִכְבְּדוּ אֵלַי: "which God and men honor (esteem) in me." Compare ver. 13. Dr. Cassel renders as the E. V. — Ta.]

[7 Ver. 17. — וְנִשְׁלַח אֶת־נַפְשִׁי מִבְּנֵי: literally, "cast his life from before (him); cf. the marginal reading of the E. V.: *i. e.* "disregarded his own life." — Ta.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 1. Shechem was a chief city in Ephraim (cf. Josh. xxiv. 1). That tribe still continued to be jealous of the consideration to which under Gideon Manasseh had attained. Though Gideon was now dead, the ephod was still in Ophrah, and the house of Gideon continued to hold a certain

degree of authority. The narrative distinguishes between the sons of Gideon and Abimelech. While ch. viii. 30 states that Gideon had seventy sons by "many wives" (נָשִׁים), ver. 31 remarks that the mother of Abimelech was a concubine (פִּלְגֶשֶׁת), in Shechem.<sup>1</sup> Just this son, an Ephraimite on his mother's side, bore the name of Abimelech, "My Father is King." The origin of that lust after power, which manifests itself in his wild and ambitious heart, is thus psychologically explained.

Vers. 2, 3. For they said, He is our brother. Abimelech, when he turned to Shechem with his criminal plans, was perfectly acquainted with the vain-glorious lust after power indulged in by the Ephraimites. He knew that it irritated them, to hear of the "rule of the seventy sons of Gideon." Gideon, it is true, desired no dominion, nor could his sons exercise it; but the centre of distinction was nevertheless at Ophrah, in his house, where the ephod was. The negotiations into which Abimelech now enters with Shechem are very instructive. They show, first, that the distinction which the ephod conferred on the house of Gideon, although it implied no claim to dominion, properly speaking, was yet the very thing which, by exciting envy, became a snare to that house; and, secondly, that Shechem, as Gideon's heir, will nevertheless not surrender this distinction, but desires to transfer it to one of its own people. The narrative is throughout of a tragic cast. Precisely those things which should exhort to greatness and faithfulness, are shamefully metamorphosed by sin into incentives to treason and mischief. In the hearts of the "lords of Shechem," no voice of truth or justice raises itself against the unnatural plan of Abimelech. They convict him not of falsehood, by pointing out that his brothers do not exercise dominion, but support his project, because he is their brother, and by him they will rule. It is manifest that the whole of Shechem is morally depraved. As Abimelech, so his kindred; and as they, so all the Shechemites were disposed.

Vers. 4, 5. And they gave him seventy silver-pieces out of the house of Baal-berith. Israel was forbidden to enter into covenant (*berith*) with the nations round about (cf. ch. ii. 2). The first symptom of apostasy among them, was always the inclination to remove the barriers between themselves and their heathen neighbors. The concessions required to make the establishment of covenant relations possible, were altogether one-sided: it was always Israel, and Israel only, that surrendered any part of its faith. The worship of a Baal-berith was the symbol of fellowship with the heathen, whereby the command to make no covenants was violated. His temple was the point of union for both parties. The support of Abimelech in his undertaking came from all the worshippers of Baal-berith; for was it not directed against the house of Jerubbaal, the declared enemy of Baal? Such being its character, it had

moreover a proper claim on the treasures of the temple of Baal-berith. What a disgrace, when the son of the "Baal-vanquisher" takes money from the temple of that same Baal, for the purpose of murdering his brothers! What a victory of Satan over the youthful votary of ambition! And cheap enough was the price of blood. The idle rabble who hired themselves as body-guard to Abimelech, received a silver-piece, *i. e.* a shekel, for the head of each of Gideon's sons. However vague the impression we get of a piece of money in that age by computing its equivalent in our coin, it is nevertheless frightful to think how little it cost (scarcely more than half a dollar) to procure the performance of the most horrible deed.

And he slew his brethren. Abimelech is a perfect type of the tyrant, as he frequently appears in Greek history, continental and insular, and also, in more recent times, on Italian soil. Machiavelli (*Prince*, ch. viii.) says, that "whoever seizes a crown, unjustly and violently, must, if cruelty be necessary, exercise it to the full at once, in order to avoid the necessity of beginning it anew every day." In support of this maxim, he refers, first to Agathocles, and then to the petty tyrant of Fermo, Oliverotto, who in order to become master of the city, caused his uncle, who was also his foster-father, friend, and benefactor, to be traitorously slain at a banquet. — Only one escaped, the youngest, Jotham by name. The confession of Jehovah, which this name of his youngest son implies, evidences the constant piety and faithfulness of Gideon, and confirms our conjecture that not he, but Shechem, invented the name Abimelech.

Ver. 6. And all the lords of Shechem held an assembly. Gideon's sons being murdered, an election of a king now takes place. As the electors, so their king. The noble undertaking had succeeded; the house of Gideon was destroyed. What a contrast! After the glorious victory over Midian, Gideon, though urgently besought by the men of many tribes, will not consent to continue to be even their imperator; now, the Shechemites raise the assassin of his brothers to the dignity of a king! A kingship like that of the heathen cities on the coast, with no law, but with plenty of blood, without the oil of consecration, but steeped in sin, is thus violently and vain-gloriously set up by Shechem and its fortress (Beth-Millo<sup>2</sup>); and that too, with a reckless hardihood as great as that which characterized the preliminary murders, in a spot consecrated by sacred memories. There where Joshua, before he died (Josh. xxiv. 25, 26), made a covenant with the people on God's behalf, where he had solemnly bound them to the observance of the law, and where they had promised to obey God alone, — there, at the great stone, set up by Joshua under the oak, two apostate, self-seeking cities, stained with murder and unbelief, elect a son of Jerubbaal, who suffered himself to be bought in the interest of Baal, to be their king! For the coronation, the narrative tells us, took place יָם אֵלֹן מִלּוֹ, at the monument-oak,

are all the inhabitants of the citadel, the same who in ver. 46 are spoken of as 'all the citizens of Migdol or the Tower.' BERTHEAU: "The high plateau of Mt. Gerizim, by which the city (Shechem) is commanded, seems to offer the most suitable site for this Millo, as it also did for later fortifications (Rob. II. 277, 278, comp. p. 294). This location of the fortress, at some little distance from the city, which lay in the narrow valley, would explain the distinction constantly maintained in our chapter between the inhabitants of Shechem and the house, *i. e.* population, of Millo or the Tower." — Tr.]

<sup>1</sup> Jotham, also, speaks of Abimelech, with special contempt, as the "son of the slave-woman" (ver. 18).

<sup>2</sup> KML: "Millo is unquestionably the name of the fortress or citadel of the city of Shechem, the same with the Tower of Shechem in vers. 46-49. The word מִלּוֹ

(Millo), as also the Chaldee מִלְּיָה, 'filling,' signifies a rampart formed of two walls, the space between which is filled up with rubbish. There was also a Millo at Jerusalem 2 Sam. v. 9. 1 Kgs. ix. 15. 'All the house of Millo,'

near Shechem."<sup>1</sup> And though nothing further is said about the place, it may nevertheless be inferred, from the connection and the tragic character of the occurrence, that the narrator, in bringing its locality to the mind of the reader, designs to make the shameful character of the transaction more strikingly evident, just as throughout this passage he constantly writes Jerubbaal, not Gideon, in order to render more prominent the contrast between these servants and that great victor of Baal.<sup>2</sup>

Ver. 7. And they told it to Jotham. While the preparations for the coronation are in progress, tidings of them are brought to Jotham, the last scion of the stock of Gideon. What shall he do? The whole nation is fallen into listlessness and inactivity. The horrible massacre has called forth no rising. Even those tribes who had perhaps heard of it, but took no part in it, continue quiescent. Sin has dulled every nerve of courage and gratitude. The son of the hero still receives intelligence; a few helpers are with him in his flight; a few others perhaps sigh with him in secret; but beyond this, he is alone. The spirit, however, of his father, has not left him. While below they crown the fratricide, he appears above, on the rock, like an impersonation of conscience. So the modern poet, with like grandeur of conception, makes Tell appear on the rock above the tyrant. Jotham's arrow, however, is not sped from the fatal bow, but from a noble spirit. It is the arrow of parabolic discourse, dipped in personal grief and divine retribution, that he sends down among them. Mount Gerizim was the mount of blessing (Deut. xxvii. 12); but through the sin of Shechem, it becomes, in the parable of Jotham, a mount of judgment. Its present name, already borne in the Middle Ages, is el Tûr (the Mountain). It rises to a height of eight hundred feet above the present Nâblus (Rob. ii. 276). Jotham probably appeared on some projecting point, near enough to be heard, and distant enough to be not easily caught.<sup>3</sup> Hearken unto me, he says, and may God hear you. He wishes them to hear his parable, as he desires God (*Elohim*) to hear the coronation rejoicings that rise up from the valley.

Vers. 8-21. The parable belongs to the most remarkable productions of Israelitish life, not only on account of its political significance, but also for what may be called its literary character. Fable and so-called apologue are of oriental, non-Israelitish, as also non-Grecian, origin. They spring from a pantheism in which trees and animals furnished symbols for expressing the popular ideas. Although rooted in the religious vivification of nature, their employment was nevertheless brought

to maturity by the pressure of social necessities. In the East, fable and tale were always the weapons of mind against violence and tyranny (cf. my *Eddischen Studien*, p. 15). They furnished the people with individual consolation against general misery. In their original appearance among the Greeks also, they fail not to exhibit this character. In the same way, Jotham speaks to the tyrants of Shechem in this popular language, which all understand. He does not speak like a prophet, for he is none, and Baal has stopped the ears of his auditors. He does not even speak of the power and mighty deeds of Jehovah, from whom his own name is derived. He speaks of "*Elohim*" and his retributions -- of the Deity in the general sense in which the heathen also acknowledge Him. He speaks altogether in their language, popularly, with popular wisdom. But what a difference between the moral strength which justifies Jotham to put forth his parable, and (for instance) the motives of the Greek Archilochus. There we hear the wounded vanity of a rejected suitor; here, one solitary voice of indignation and truth against the tyrant and murderer. By this moral motive, Jotham elevates the parable to the level of the divine word, and furnishes the first illustration of how a popular form of discourse, the offspring of directly opposite principles, could be employed for moral purposes, and (in the parables of Christ) become a medium for the highest doctrines and mysteries. Jotham gives a parable and points out its application (from ver. 16 onward); but also apart from the latter, the narrative conveys an independent political idea with a force which has scarcely been equaled by any subsequent expression of it. It manifests a political consciousness so mature, as to surprise one who looks at the apparently simple and common-place relations of the time and people.

The trees will have a king. No reason is given, but the history of Israel, to which reference is had, furnishes one. People felt that in the dangers of war, one common leadership was important. They supposed that their frequent sufferings at the hands of Moab and Midian, were owing to defects in their form of government. They would have a king, in order to be able, as in their folly they think they shall be, to dispense with obedience to the commands of God. Gideon says: God is your Ruler. The apostate people will fill his place with a king, and think that in their selection, they act in accordance with the will of God.

Offers of kingly dignity are seldom refused. Solon, properly speaking, never received a tender of royalty; and Otto, Duke of Saxony, the father of Henry I. was already too old to bear such a

<sup>1</sup> מִן־בֵּית is most probably to be taken as מִן־בֵּיתָהּ or מִן־בֵּיתָהּ.

<sup>2</sup> [Kirro (*Daily Bible Illustrations: Moses and the Judges*, p. 365): — "It will occur to the reader to ask what right the people of Shechem had to nominate a king, by their sole authority. In the first place, it must be remembered that the land had formerly been governed by a number of petty kings, ruling over some strong town and its immediate district and dependent villages; and it is likely that the Shechemites claimed no more than to appoint Abimelech as such a king over themselves, assuming that they for themselves, whatever might be the view of others, had a right to choose a king to reign over them. Besides, Shechem was one of the chief towns of Ephraim; and that proud and powerful tribe always claimed to take the leading part in public affairs, if not to determine the course of the other tribes — except, perhaps, of those connected with Judah in

the south. It was under the influence of this desire for supremacy, that the revolt against the house of David was organized in that tribe, and resulted in the establishment of the separate kingdom for the ten tribes, in which Ephraim had the chief influence. Indeed, that establishment of a separate monarchy was accomplished at this very place where Abimelech is now declared king. Taking all this into account, it may seem reasonable to conclude that the Shechemites had the support of the tribe in this transaction, or might at least reckon with reasonable confidence upon its not being withheld. Then, again, a king chosen at Shechem, and supported by this powerful tribe, might reasonably calculate that the other tribes would soon give in their adhesions, seeing that, in the time of his father their monarchical predilections had been so strongly manifested." — Tr.]

<sup>3</sup> [Cf. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, ii. 209. — Tr.]

burden 'as Widukind says, *Ipse vero quasi jam gravior annis recusabat imperii onus*). The good trees, however, notwithstanding their strength, will not be elected; they deem the species of royalty which is offered them, too insignificant to warrant the sacrifice of what they already possess. The olive tree, fig tree, and grape-vine, enjoy sufficient honor, happiness, and distinction, not to prefer this sort of coronation to their present activity. They will rather continue in a condition which secures their personal worth, than go to "wave over the trees." It is a beautiful image of popular favor, uncertain, unequal, affected by every wind, which is afforded by the branches of trees, never at rest, always waving. The proffered royalty is dependent on popular favor. It is a royalty which must bend to every breeze, if it would avoid a fall. For they to whom the office is offered, are too noble to use the means necessary to maintain their authority when popular favor deserts them. They must first have lost their nobility of nature, before they can follow the call now made to them. It was a noble king of recent times, who, from similar motives, strenuously resisted to accept what was offered him.

It is very significant that this doctrine proceeds from Jotham, the son of Gideon. He has his eye, of course, on the refusal of the crown by his father; only he brings the negative side of that refusal into special prominence. He makes it evident that even then the fickle and discordant character of popular favor and popular will was thoroughly apprehended. But one needed to be the son of a divinely called hero, to be able to set forth with cutting force the unprincipled conduct of revolutionary malcontents. Against a true kingship, as afterwards established in Israel, and which in its idea forms the highest perfection of the theocracy, Jotham says nothing. The people that applies to Samuel for a king, is a very different one from these criminal Shechemites, who attempt to get a king in opposition to God. These latter, for this reason, can only use a king who has nothing to lose, and is worthy of them: whose fit symbol is the thorn-bush. Sin loves arbitrariness; therefore they deserve a tyrant. The thorn-bush is the type of persons who, after they have accepted power offered by bloody hands, are qualified to preserve it by bloody means.

The aesthetic beauty of the parable is also to be noted. Trees afford the best representation of a republic; each tree has its own sphere of action, and no one is in a position to exercise any special influence over the others. Whoever among them would attempt this in the character of king, must, so to speak, leave the soil in which he is planted, and hover over them all. Their will would then be for him, what otherwise the nourishing earth is for all. Any productive tree would thereby lose its fruit. For the unfruitful thorn-bush alone, the office would involve no loss. The fable is especially beautiful as typical of Israelitish relations. The tribes are all equal. Like the trees, they all receive their strength from God. If they withdraw themselves from Him, in order to crown the thorn-bush, they will experience that which issues from the thorn-bush — namely, fire.

The profound significance of the parable is inexhaustible. Its truth is of perpetual recurrence. More than once was Israel in the position of the Shechemites; then especially, when He whose kingdom is not of this world, refused to be a king. Then, too, Herod and Pilate became friends. The thorn-bush seemed to be king when it encircled

the head of the Crucified. But Israel experienced what is here denounced: a fire went forth, and consumed city and people, temple and fortress.

And they said to the olive-tree. The olive tree is already a king among trees in his own right; hence, Columella calls it "the first among trees." His product is used to honor both "God and man." His oil consecrates "kings and priests," and feeds the light that burns in the sanctuary of God. The olive tree is the symbol of peaceful royalty; its leaf and branch are signs of reconciliation and peace; hence, Israel in its divine glory is compared to the "beautiful olive tree" (Hos. xiv. 6).

Denying the request of the trees, the olive tree says: "Have I then lost (הֲחָלִיתִי), an unusual form, which with Kell I regard as a simple Kal) my oil, that I should wave over the trees?" Has Israel then lost its life of peace in God, its sacred anointing through God's servants, its pious light and life in God's law? Has it grown poor as to its God, that it must suffer itself to be governed by heathen arts? The product of the olive tree and the deeds of Abimelech stand in the sharpest contrast with each other.

The same result follows an application to the fig tree. This also is a symbol of that divine peace which fills the land when God governs. The ancients believed that if a wild, untamed bullock were fastened to a fig tree, he would become quiet and gentle (Plutarch, *Symposion*, lib. vi. quæst. 10). Athens, on similar symbolical grounds, had a sacred fig tree as well as olive tree. In Scripture, especially, the fig tree appears as a symbol of holy peace, as the prophet Micah says (ch. iv. 4): "They shall sit every man under his vine and fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid." So Jotham makes the fig tree say suggestively: Have I then — Israel — lost the possibility of sitting in the peace of God? Was there not an abundance of rest and happiness during forty years under Gideon? shall I surrender all that in order to fall into the arbitrariness of sin? For it can act like Shechem only when the peace of God no longer exists; but, in that case, it withers away, like the fig tree rebuked by Christ, and ceases to bring forth fruit.

The same is true of the grape-vine. The oriental vine attains the height of elms and cedars, and affords a grateful shade. Hence it is the widely-diffused symbol of government, as that which gives peace and comfort. "The mountains," says the Psalmist (lxxx. 11), "are covered with the shadow of it." A golden vine canopied the throne of the Persian monarch. Vines of gold were frequently presented to kings in recognition of their sovereignty (cf. my essay, *Der Goldene Thron Salomo's*, in *Wiss. Bericht*, i. p. 124). A celebrated golden vine, mention of which is made by Tacitus also, stood in the temple at Jerusalem. The Mishna says of it: At the entrance to the temple porch there stood a golden vine, trained on poles; whenever any one consecrated anything, he consecrated it as "leaf" or "grape." Elieser b. R. Zadok related, that once it was so vast, that 300 priests were necessary to take it away (*Mishna, Middot*, iii. 8).

The olive tree said that with him God and men were "honored;" the vine expresses the same thing when he speaks of the "joy" which "God and men" find in him. Usually all that is said of wine is, that "it makes glad the heart of man;" it is, however, also over wine, and wine only, that

the "blessing of God" is pronounced,<sup>1</sup> and Melchizedek, as "priest of the Most High God," brings "bread and wine" (Gen. xiv. 18). Nevertheless, the phrase "God and men," is probably to be regarded as proverbial, and as signifying that wine cheers all persons, not excepting the highest and noblest. Since the Middle Ages, we [Germans] use the expression *Gott und die Welt*—God and the world—in a similar manner. Hartmann von Aue (in his *Iwein*, ver. 262) says: *Verlegeniu muozkeit ist gote und der werlte leit* (mouldering idleness is offensive to God and the world).

The transition from the shade-giving vine to the thorn-bush presents us with a very striking contrast. It is indeed in connection with the thorn-bush, that the narrative displays its nicest shading.

While the trees say מִלְכָּךְ to the olive tree, and מִלְכִּי to the fig tree and vine, unusual forms of the imperative which convey, as it seems to me, the idea of a respectful petition, they address the thorn-bush in common style: מִלְכֵּךְ עֲלֵי. When it comes to calling on the thorn-bush to be king, the respect which was felt for the olive tree and his compeers, has no longer any place. It may also be remarked that the shady vine is often at no great distance from the thorn-bush. Not unfrequently, even at this day, fertile wine-hills in the holy land, rejoicing also in olive and fig trees, are hedged in by thorn-bushes (cf. Rosenmüller, *Morgenland*, on Prov. xv. 19).

And the thorn-bush said: **If you really anoint me king over you.** There lies in this the sharpest censure for the trees. The thorn-bush itself can scarcely believe that its election as king is honestly meant (מִלְכֵּךְ). Equally striking is it, that Jotham makes the thorn-bush speak of the trees as wishing to "anoint" him. Anoint with what? With oil. But the "oil tree" has already refused to be king over such subjects! The idea is: they anoint with oil, the symbol of peace, while they have murder and the opposite of peace in their hearts.—The thorn-bush declares his readiness to give them all he has. They are at liberty to shelter themselves in his shadow. But he gives no protection against the sun, and his branches are full of thorns. In case of disobedience and apostasy, he will cause fire to go forth, and without respect of persons consume all rebels, even the cedars of Lebanon. For these are his only arts and abilities—to prick and to burn. Æsop has a fable (No. 8) which teaches a similar moral, albeit playfully weakened. It treats of the "Fox and the Thorn-bush." The fox, to save himself from falling, lays hold of the thorn-bush, and gets dreadfully torn by the sharp needles. In answer to his outcry, the thorn-bush says: How canst thou hope to lay hold of me, who am accustomed only to lay hold of others.

Jotham's application in ver. 16 forms a perfect parallel to the speech of the thorn-bush in ver. 15. A minute explanation, that the Shechemites are the trees; that the heroes who heretofore benefited Israel (not merely Gideon, nor as the Rabbis think, Othniel and Barak only), correspond to the olive tree and his equals; and that the thorn-bush means Abimelech, is altogether unnecessary. The scene which he delineates, is it not transpiring before him in the valley below? All he needs to do,

is to call their attention to the certainty that the threatening of the thorn-bush will be fulfilled on them; for that is yet future.

As the thorn-bush says to the trees, "If you honestly anoint me king," so Jotham, with crushing irony, says to the people: **If now you have acted honestly and sincerely in making Abimelech king.** The heathen, as well as the worshippers of the true God, believed that good or evil deeds are recompensed by good or evil results. Even when the Persian Oroetes unlawfully murders the tyrant Polycrates, and afterwards perishes himself in a similar manner, Herodotus (iii. 128) remarks: "Thus did the avenging spirits of Polycrates the Samian overtake him." It was maintained that the tyrant Agathocles had perished on the same day in which he had committed his horrible treason against his confederate Ophellus. This belief, prevalent even among heathen, pointed out the most vulnerable side of conscience. Though they turn away from the altar of *Jehovah*, they will not be able to escape the law of *Elohim*, who is even now listening to their loud acclamations. If they think—such is the bitter irony of Jotham's indignant heart—that the collective trees (ver. 14, מִלְכֵּךְ עֲלֵי) can mean it honestly, when they anoint a thorn-bush, then they also, perhaps, acted "honestly and sincerely" when they called Abimelech their king, slew the house of the hero who regarded not his own life to save them, and crowned the murderer, the son of the bondwoman. Such "honesty and virtue" will not fail of their appropriate recompense. The words of the thorn-bush will be fulfilled. The sequel will show the reward. Israel will then perceive the enormity of that which in its present state of moral prostration it allows to pass unchallenged. If such a horrible deed can be deemed "good," he repeats—and the repetition marks the intensity of his grief—then may you rejoice in Abimelech, as now down there in the valley you (hypocritically) shout for joy; but if not then may you experience what it means to have the thorn-bush for king! Then will sin dissolve what sin began; crime will discover what treason bound together. Then will fire from the thorn-bush consume the sinful trees, and fire from the trees the tyrannical king. Thus he spake, and thus they heard. But sin and excitement drowned the voice of conscience. The friendship between them and their king, and the joy they felt in him, were yet young. Israel kept silence, and Jotham, the hero's son, fled to Beer. Where this place lay, cannot be determined. Probably in the south—near the desert, which would afford the fugitive security against Abimelech's persecution. Of Jotham, nothing more is known; but from amidst the tragedy which throws its dark shadows over the house of his father, his discourse sounds forth, an imperishable call to repentance, addressed to the world in the language of the world, and an admonisher to kings and nations of the certainty of retribution.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Abimelech the Fratricide. Gideon doubtless excelled in power all previous Judges; the deliverance wrought out by him surpassed all previous deliverances. This fact perhaps helps to explain the greatness of the shadow that fell upon the land after his death. The story of Abimelech displays before us a terrible contrast to the government of Gideon. It exhibits strength attended by the most,

<sup>1</sup> [The third cup at the Passover meal was called the "Cup of Blessing," because it was accompanied by a prayer of praise and thanksgiving. Cf. 1 Cor. x. 16.—Tr.]

abominable lust after power, energy with ungodliness, victorious talents with utter criminality. Such was the contrast offered by Abimelech with the memory of his father, in whom strength was united to humility, energy to piety, and victory to righteousness. The history of Abimelech teaches that sin (1) forgets good deeds; and (2) inspires misdeeds; but also, (3) that one abomination punishes another, even to destruction. If Gideon had not taken a concubine, this misery would not have come upon Israel! Why did he take her, and from Shechem, a city whose character he must have known! Why did he allow her son to be called "My Father is King!" The little weaknesses of a great man, become the great temptations of small men. Against the murderous fury of sin, there is no protection. The true sons of Gideon were peaceable. They were sons of a hero, but not trained to bloodshedding (ch. viii. 20). They had among them the ephod, reminder of Gideon's victory. They were related to Abimelech, related more closely than the Shechemites; for they were his brothers, and brothers by such a father: but it availed them nothing. "Piety," says the great poet (Goethe), "is a close bond, but ungodliness still closer." The hand once lifted up to murder, does not spare its own brothers. Bloodthirstiness beclouds both eye and heart. It makes no distinction. Thus, sin lies lurking at the door, until its victim bids it enter. Abimelech's conduct has found imitators among Christians. The murderous deeds committed since his day, some of them at the bidding of church authorities, lie like a blood-cloud over the face of history. Only the love of Jesus Christ can penetrate through it, with the sunbeam of his reconciliation.

Abimelech was tyrant, and Jotham must flee. The bloody knife reigns and the spirit which speaks in parables and lives in faith is banished. But Abimelech comes to shame, smitten by a desperate woman (ver. 53), while Jotham's parable, like a winged arrow, pierces all fratricides, from Abimelech down to Richard III. of England. While Abimelech, a false king, passed on, burdened by a load of hatred, Jotham spent his life, as befitted a mourner, in a profound quiet. Seb. Schmidt says, that "God knows how to give peace and safety to those who innocently become faint-hearted, although men fail to espouse their righteous causes." Such is the preaching of the word of God concerning the world's condition, (1) when a Gideon reigns; (2) when an Abimelech rules. The government of the faithful is the salvation of all; and likewise sin is the destruction of men, not excepting those who commit it. There is a judgment. God is not mocked.

STARKE: Those are ignoble souls, who seek to reach an office, not through their own gifts and virtues, but through the favor and influence of their friends. — THE SAME: To lift one's self up by unlawful and sinful means, is sure to bring a curse. THE SAME: God men are all alike in this, that they do what is godly and righteous, because they know well that there is but one godliness and one

righteousness. — THE SAME: The unity of bad men can speedily be changed, by the judgment of God, into enmity and mutual destruction. — GERLACH: Jotham stands forth like a warning prophet, who interprets coming events before they occur, and who is at the same time a sign that the Lord has not left the faith of Gideon unrewarded, notwithstanding the terrible judgment that overtakes his house.

[Bp. HALL: Those that are most unworthy of honor, are hottest in the chase of it; whilst the consciousness of better deserts bids men sit still, and stay to be either importuned or neglected. There can be no greater sign of unfitness, than vehement suit. It is hard to say whether there be more pride or arrogance in ambition. — THE SAME: The Shechemites are fit brokers for Abimelech: that city which once betrayed itself to utter depopulation, in yielding to the suit of Hamor, now betrays itself and all Israel in yielding to the request of Abimelech. — THE SAME: Natural respects are the most dangerous corrupters of all elections. What hope can there be of worthy superiors in any free people, where nearness of blood carries it from fitness of disposition? Whilst they say, "He is our brother," they are enemies to themselves and Israel. — THE SAME: Who would not now think that Abimelech should find a hell in his breast, after so barbarous and unnatural a massacre? and yet, behold, he is as senseless as the stone upon which the blood of his seventy brethren was spilt. Where ambition hath possessed itself thoroughly of the soul, it turns the heart into steel, and makes it incapable of a conscience. All sins will easily down with the man that is resolved to rise. — HENRY: Way being thus made for Abimelech's election, the men of Shechem proceed to choose him king. God was not consulted, there was no advising with the priest, or with their brethren of any other city or tribe, though it was designed he should rule over Israel. — SCOTT: If parents could foresee their children's sufferings, their joy in them would be often turned into lamentations; we may therefore be thankful that we cannot penetrate futurity, and are reminded to commit those whom we most love into the hands of the Lord, and to attend to our present duty, casting our care upon Him, respecting ourselves and them. — BUSH: The general moral of Jotham's parable is, (1.) That weak and worthless men are ever forward to thrust themselves into power, while the wise and good are more prone to decline it. (2.) That they who unduly affect honor, and they who unjustly confer it, will prove sources of misery to each other. — KIRRO: There are indeed legitimate objects of the highest ambition, and of the most exalted aspirations. Crowns and kingdoms lie beneath the feet of him who pursues with steady pace his high career toward the city of the Great King, where he knows there is laid up for him a crown of glory that fadeth not away — a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will bestow upon all that love him appearing. — Tr.]

*Discord between Abimelech and Shechem. The intrigue of Gaal.*

## CHAPTER IX. 22-30.

- 22 When [And] Abimelech had [omit: had] reigned [held sway] three years over  
 23 Israel, [.] Then [And] God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men  
 [lords] of Shechem; and the men [lords] of Shechem dealt treacherously with  
 24 Abimelech: That the cruelty [violence] *done* to the three-score and ten sons of  
 Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be laid upon Abimelech their brother which  
 25 slew them, and upon the men [lords] of Shechem which aided him [strengthened  
 his hands] in [for] the killing of his brethren. And the men [lords] of Shechem  
 set liers in wait [ambuscades] for<sup>1</sup> him in the top of the mountains, and they  
 26 robbed all that came along that way by them: and it was told Abimelech. And  
 Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brethren [on an expedition], and went over to  
 [passed over into] Shechem: and the men [lords] of Shechem put their confidence  
 27 in him. And they went out into the fields, and gathered their vineyards [held vin-  
 tage], and trode *the grapes*, and made merry [prepared harvest-feasts], and went  
 28 into the house of their god, and did eat and drink, and cursed Abimelech. And  
 Gaal the son of Ebed said, Who *is* Abimelech, and who *is* Shechem, that we should  
 serve him? *is not he* the [a] son of Jerubbaal? and [*is not*] Zebul his officer?  
 serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem: for why should we serve him?<sup>2</sup>  
 29 And would to God this people were under my hand! then would I remove Abim-  
 30 elech. And he said to Abimelech, Increase<sup>3</sup> thine army, and come out. And  
 when [omit: when] Zebul the ruler [prefect] of the city heard the words of Gaal  
 the son of Ebed, [and] his anger was kindled.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 25. — **לְ**. **KEIL**: "Dat. incommodi; to his disadvantage." Cf. the Commentary. — **TR.**]

[2 Ver. 23. — **DE WETTE**: "Why should we serve him, we?" The position of **וְיָבִיטְהוּ** at the end of the sentence, marks the speaker's indignation at the thought of Shechem's serving a son of Jerubbaal. — **TR.**]

[3 Ver. 29. — The pronunciation **וְיָבִיטְהוּ** (with seghol) is perhaps designed to give to the imperative piel form the strengthening effect of the ending **וְיָבִיטְהוּ** found with the other imperative (**וְיָבִיטְהוּ**), but of which "**וְיָבִיטְהוּ**" verba do not admit. Cf. Ewald, *Gram.* p. 511, note. — **TR.**]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 22. **And Abimelech held sway.** The narrator says not, "he reigned" (**וַיִּמְלֹךְ**), nor "he ruled" (**וַיִּשְׁלֹט**), but **וַיִּשְׁרָר**: Abimelech was nothing but a **שֹׁרֵר**. He is not acknowledged either as a rightful king, or as a military chieftain of Israel: he is only a usurper, whom his adherents have clothed with arrogated power. And though his authority is said to have been "over Israel," this does not mean that it extended over the whole nation. The history shows that his authority did not extend beyond the narrow circle of the mountains of Ephraim. Deference and consideration were doubtless paid him in more extended regions, for these no *fait accompli*, whether it be good or evil, ever fails to command.

Ver. 23. **And God sent an evil spirit.** Friendship among the wicked is only a league of vice against others. In itself it cannot stand. Wickedness, says Hesiod, prepares its own punishment. Abimelech, it seems, ruled three years in peace. Plutarch, in his noble treatise on the purposes of the Deity in so often delaying the retribution due to crime, finds the ground of it in the wisdom of

Providence, which knows the opportune moment for punishment. Here, as in other passages where he speaks of unholy men, our narrator names the recompensing deity Elohim, not Jehovah. Elohim sends the evil spirit of discord among them; for the undeviating law by which sin punishes itself, is grounded in the very nature of the Deity. It would be the destruction of the justice and truth of the divine government, if worthlessness escaped its recompense. The moral universe is so constituted as to ensure evil fruits to evil deeds. The experience which here presents itself is one of the most common in the history of states and individuals. It is the type of all unnatural conspiracies against right, and of their issue. It is moreover demonstrative of the perfect clearness with which the divine government of the world is apprehended in the Book of Judges, that the falling out of vice with itself, and the stopping up by wickedness of the natural sources of its own advantage, are represented as the action of an evil spirit sent by Elohim.<sup>1</sup> Shechem now seeks to deal with Abimelech, as heretofore it helped him to deal with the sons of Gideon. Treason began, and treason ends, the catastrophe.

Ver. 24. **That the violence . . . might come home.** The twofold expression of the

<sup>1</sup> "A something is meant which operates upon the intellectual nature (*das Geistige Wesen*) of man; therefore, neither a disposition, nor yet a demon." Hoffmann, *Schriftbeweis*, i. 109



thought, first by לָבוֹא, and then by לָשׁוּב, serves to give it emphasis. The whole history is related so fully, only to show Israel that there is such a thing as retributive justice, — that sin bears its guilt and punishment. Blood comes home to murderers as guilt. Who did ever experience this more terribly than Israel itself, when it slew Him who was more than Gideon and his sons! That which this narrative exhibits as coming on Abimelech and Shechem in the course of three years, the history of the world, has manifestly fulfilled through centuries on those who cried, "His blood be on us and on our children!" Both are punished, Abimelech and Shechem; for both are equally guilty. So likewise both Jerusalem suffered, and the empire by which Pilate was appointed.

Ver. 25. And they laid ambuscades for him. What it was that gave immediate occasion for discord, is not communicated. But Shechem found that it had deceived itself, in thinking that Abimelech's elevation would make itself the virtual ruler. It had fallen into the hands of an iron despot, against whom the cowardly and pleasure-loving Shechemites did not dare openly to rise. They resorted therefore to underhanded stratagems to make him odious. For the robberies committed from places of concealment become perfectly intelligible, and fall moreover into harmonious connection with the expression "נִיבְּקָדֵר", they dealt treacherously" (ver. 23), when they are regarded as carried on by the Shechemites, but in such a manner as to make them appear to be ordered or instigated by Abimelech. Through them he had become a murderer; they would now make him seem to be a robber and highwayman. But Abimelech received intelligence of the deception. Henceforth, the peace between them was broken; and people such as are here portrayed, know very well that now it is time to be on their guard against each other.

Vers. 26-28. And Gaal Ben-Ebed came. An adventurer, probably a Shechemite, whose name perhaps already expresses the popular contempt into which the braggart subsequently fell, having come to the city with his followers, the Shechemites thought that in him they had found a party-leader who could protect them against Abimelech. Accordingly, they held their vintage, celebrated their harvest-home with songs of rejoicing (הִלְלִים), and then observed the customary sacrificial banquet in the temple of their god. The narrative seeks to exhibit the dramatic contrast between the present jubilant enjoyment and the approaching terrible issue, the present boldness and the subsequent cowardice, the passing luxury and the impending death and destruction. Such sacrificial feasts, particularly as connected with the temple of the "Covenant-God," were also known elsewhere (cf. *Dion. Halicarn.* iv. 25, on the "covenant-feast" at Ephesus; cf. K. F. Hermann, *R. A. der Griechen*, ed. Stark, § 66, 4). Among all nations, says Athenæus (*lib. v. p.* 192), every meal was referred to God, and He was honored with song and praise. But these feasters in the temple at Shechem had no thought of religion. To them applies what Plutarch says, in the introduction to

his *Symposium*: "when barbarity and immorality betake themselves to wine, the banquet comes to a disastrous end." The fumes of wine make these men rash and thoughtless. That which they hitherto kept secret, they now divulge. Maledictions against Abimelech make themselves heard. The scene enables us to estimate aright the political wisdom of the Corinthian Tyrant Periander, when he forbade social feasts to his opponents. The speech of the poltroon Gaal is especially remarkable. The episode in which the narrator acquaints us with the divine judgment on Abimelech affords at the same time a glance into the hidden springs of political life in a city like Shechem.

Let us serve the men of Hamor, the father of Shechem. The apostasy of Israel, after the death of Gideon, in Shechem took the form of a covenant entered into with the remaining heathen. The contrast between heathenism and the religious life of Israel was founded in the existence and the characters of national and local idol gods over against the true God of Israel. The covenant between the heathen and the apostate Israelites in Shechem, found its expression in the election of Abimelech as king, on the ground that on the one hand he was Shechem's brother, and on the other Gideon's son. This covenant now breaks up. The wine-heated Gaal pronounces the word: even Abimelech is still too much of Israel. "By what right," he says, "does Abimelech command our homage? Is he not always still a son of Jerubbaal, the enemy of our god?" The reaction of heathenism must be made complete. Shechem must hold fast to its own ancestors. The families who trace their descent from the heathen Hamor (*Gen. xxiv.*) i. e. those who desire to banish all Israelitish traditions, must be the masters! The offspring of Hamor, the heathen progenitor, must not serve the descendants of Jacob! When the Tyrant of Sicyon<sup>2</sup> sought to throw off the influence of Argos, he expelled from the city the worship of Adrastus, the primitive Argive hero. That was his way of declaring himself independent.

Is he not a son of Jerubbaal? and is not Zebul his overseer? Zebul, who in ver. 30 is called the "prefect of the city," was not of the party who now feasted. He evidently belonged to the Israelites, who, though they had made a covenant with the heathenism of Shechem, were not willing to serve the children of Hamor. He belonged to the upper families of the city; and Gaal in his drunken audacity, discloses the idea that he also must be overthrown, "because Abimelech's tool."

Vers. 29, 30. Verse 29 gives the further speech of Gaal in a very vivid and forcible manner. "O that some one would give this people into my hands! then would I quickly remove Abimelech! That is directed against Zebul. What Gaal means, is, that if he were prefect of the city, as Zebul is, he would make short work with Abimelech.

And he said to Abimelech, Increase thine army, and come out. Gaal does not actually say this to Abimelech, nor does he cause it to be said to him, as many expositors think, for Abimelech hears of it for the first time through Zebul. It is only an animated apostrophe to Abimelech, in which Gaal boastingly challenges Abimelech to

loathe, means *loathing*, Gesenius, *Lex.*: Ben-Ebed, Son of a Slave. Cf. ver. 18, where Jotham speaks of Abimelech as a son of Gideon's bondwoman. — Tr.]

<sup>2</sup> [Clisthenes. See Herod., v. 67, and Grote, *Hist. of Greece*, iii. 33, seq. — Tr.]

1 [The author, by writing Ben (Ebed) instead of translating it as he did in the text, seems to intimate that the whole name, Gaal Ben-Ebed, was perhaps the expression of subsequent contempt. Gaal, from לָצַק, to abhor, to



prepare himself as if he were present. The inhabitants of Shechem, between their potations, doubtless applauded Gaal, which had the usual effect of emboldening the wine-heated orator. But this drunken jubilation resulted in the ruin of Shechem; for it reached the ears of Zebul. His anger kindled; for his own overthrow, he learned, was to be connected with that of Abimelech.

The narrative, in its admirable simplicity, allows us clearly to trace the advancing progress of that fatal destiny, in which secret treachery and open dissipation, boasting and jealousy, conspire together to precipitate a righteous doom upon the city.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

[BP. HALL: The prosperity of the wicked is but short and fickle. A stolen crown, though it may look fair, cannot be made of any but brittle stuff. All life is uncertain; but wickedness overruns nature. — THE SAME: It had been pity that the Shechemites should have been plagued by any other hand than Abimelech's. They raised him unjustly to the throne; they are the first that feel the weight of his sceptre. The foolish bird limes

herself with that which grew from her own excretion. Who wonders to see the kind peasant stung with his own snake? — THE SAME: How could Abimelech hope for fidelity of them, whom he had made and found traitors to his father's blood? No man knows how to be sure of him that is unseasonable. He that hath been unfaithful to one, knows the way to be perfidious, and is only fit for his trust that is worthy to be deceived; whereas faithfulness, beside the present good, lays a ground of further assurance. The friendship that is begun in evil cannot stand: wickedness, both of its own nature and through the curse of God, is ever unsteady. — THE SAME: If the men of Shechem had abandoned their false god with their false king, and out of a serious remorse and desire of satisfaction for their idolatry and blood, had opposed this tyrant, and preferred Jotham to his throne, there might have been both warrant for their quarrel, and hope of success; but now, if Abimelech be a wicked usurper, yet the Shechemites are idolatrous traitors. — THE SAME: When the quarrel is betwixt God and Satan, there is no doubt of the issue; but when one devil fights with another, what certainty is there of the victory? — TR.]

### *Abimelech appears before Shechem. Gaal's defeat and expulsion.*

#### CHAPTER IX. 31-41.

- 31 And he sent messengers unto Abimelech privily, saying, Behold, Gaal the son of Ebed, and his brethren, be come to Shechem; and behold, they fortify [excite] 32 the city against thee. Now therefore up by night, thou, and the people that *is* 33 with thee, and lie in wait in the field: And it shall be, *that* in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, thou shalt rise early, and set [move] upon the city; and behold, *when* [omit: when] he and the people that *is* with him [will] come out against [to] thee, [and] then mayest [shalt] thou do to them as thou shalt find occasion. 34 And Abimelech rose up, and all the people that *were* with him, by night, and they 35 laid wait against [near] Shechem in four companies. And Gaal the son of Ebed went out, and stood in the entering [at the entrance] of the gate of the city: and [so:] Abimelech rose up, and the people that *were* with him, from lying in wait 36 [from their place of ambush]. And when [omit: when] Gaal saw the people, [and] he said to Zebul, Behold, there come people down from the top [tops] of the mountains. And Zebul said unto him, Thou seest the shadow of the mountains as *if* 37 *they were* men. And Gaal spake again, and said, See, there [also] come people down by the middle [from the height] of the land, and another [one] company come along by the plain of Meonenim [cometh from the way of the Magicians' Grove]. 38 Then said Zebul unto him, Where *is* now thy mouth, wherewith thou saidst, Who *is* Abimelech, that we should serve him? *is* not this the people that thou hast despised? go out, I pray now, and fight with them. And Gaal went out before [at 39 the head of] the men [lords] of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech. And Abimelech chased him, and he fled before him, and many were overthrown *and* wounded 41 [many fell slain], *even* unto the entering [entrance] of the gate. And Abimelech dwelt [remained] at Arumah: and Zebul thrust out Gaal and his brethren, that they should not dwell in Shechem.

#### EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 31. And he sent secretly, סֵפֶרְסָוֶרֶת. Although the form סֵפֶרְסָוֶרֶת (cf. סֵפֶרְסָוֶרֶת) is an

unusual one, the connection suggests, not the name of a place, but the fact that Zebul, though "prefect of the city," concealed his measure from the citizens. The messengers whom he sent must have

gone "secretly" (as the Sept. and Targum translate), since Gaal had not learned of their going (ver. 36). How were such intercourse, as ver. 36 implies, possible between Zebul and Gaal, if Zebul's cooperation with Abimelech against Gaal had been publicly known? Nor is Zebul to be regarded as one of Abimelech's generals, but as a Shechemite magistrate, who is incensed because Gaal plots his own overthrow. It may be confidently assumed that if *בִּתְרָמָה* were the name of a place, ver. 34 would read: "And Abimelech rose up, *בִּתְרָמָה*, from Tormah." *בִּתְרָמָה*, however, conveys not only the idea of secrecy, but of secrecy combined with deceit, secret deceit; and such was certainly the character of Zebul's act.<sup>1</sup> It is also to be noticed that in his message Zebul does not accuse the city, but only Gaal as exciting the city against Abimelech. As magistrate, he does not wish to bring the wrath of Abimelech upon the city, but only upon his rival. Very graphic is the expression *צָרִים*, commonly used of besiegers. Gaal and his brethren, says Zebul, press the city like besiegers, to induce it to rise against thee. Their expulsion is therefore all that is necessary. But since this is not the whole truth — for Shechem, as we have seen, first elected Gaal because it had already offended against Abimelech — it is evident that Zebul's policy of exciting Abimelech against Gaal only, is dictated by regard to his own interests.

Vers. 32-41. **And move upon the city.** The place of Abimelech's abode is not given; but he was in the midst of his army. He must have been some distance from Shechem, since he needed a part of the night (ver. 32) to get within easy reach of it. He is to place himself in ambush, so as not to be prematurely observed. Abimelech follows the counsel. In the morning, Gaal and Zebul naturally betake themselves to the gate of the city: Gaal, because it had become his business to watch over Shechem; Zebul, because of his office as magistrate. Gaal, who has no misgivings — for he has slept away the effects of the wine — sees troops descending from the mountains. Zebul thinks it yet too soon to tell him the truth; he will give Abimelech time first to bring up all his forces; and therefore deceives and at the same time mocks

Gaal by saying, "It is the shadow of the mountains that thou seest." Immediately, however, a body of troops is seen advancing whose identity as such cannot be mistaken. By the "tops of the mountains" we are to understand the more distant mountains; by the "height (*גִּבּוֹר*) of the land," a nearer hill, in the immediate vicinity of the city (the "navel" of the land); and by the "Elon Meonenim," a dusky forest ("Magicians' Grove"), against the near horizon. From all these points, commanding the avenues to the city, troops of soldiers advanced, to the consternation of Gaal and the surprise of the citizens. Now Zebul throws off his mask, and reminds Gaal of his previous audacity. The latter is compelled to try his fortunes in battle. At the head of the "lords of Shechem," he marches out against Abimelech. But he is far from being a match for him. He is utterly unable to stand his ground. A terrible rout begins. Gaal saves himself through the open gate; but the road, up to the very threshold of the gate, is covered with the slain. His boasting has a miserable end. His authority is gone. Zebul, who previously did not dare insist on his expulsion, now carries it through. He persuades the timid and terrified Shechemites that they will thus allay the anger of Abimelech. He believes it himself; for he has carefully thrown the whole blame on Gaal. Abimelech's conduct seems to favor this persuasion; for he does not prosecute the attack, but retires to Arumah.<sup>2</sup> But what a delusion! The banished Gaal is the only one who escapes destruction.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

[BP. HALL: Never any man was so ill, as not to have some favorers: Abimelech hath a Zebul in the midst of Shechem. Lightly all treasons are betrayed, even with some of their own. — HENRY: Proud and haughty people are often made, in a little time, to dread those whom they had most despised. Justly are the insolent thus insulted over. — THE SAME: Most people judge of men's fitness for business by their success, and he that does not speed well, is concluded not to do well. Gaal's interest in Shechem is soon at an end, nor do we ever hear of him any more. — TR.]

<sup>1</sup> [KEIL: "*בִּתְרָמָה*": either with deceit (*בִּתְרָמָה*), from *רָמָה*, i. e. exercising deceit, inasmuch as he had listened quietly and apparently with approbation to the speech of Gaal; or, in Tormah, — noting a locality, — in which case *בִּתְרָמָה* would be an error of transcription for *ארמח* = *אַרְמָחָה* (ver. 41). The LXX and the Tar-

gum take the word as a common noun: *ἐν κρυφῇ*, secretly; so Raschi, and most of the older expositors, while R. Kimchi, the Elder, decides for its being a *nom. propr.* No certain decision can be arrived at." — TR.]

<sup>2</sup> The site of Arumah cannot be definitely determined. The probability, however, is that it was somewhere on the hills, not in the immediate vicinity of Shechem, but yet near enough for the sudden assault on Shechem which followed.

*The destruction of Shechem, and burning of the "Tower of Shechem." The siege of Thebez, and Abimelech's death.*

#### CHAPTER IX. 42-57.

42 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the people went out into the field; and 43 they told Abimelech. And he took the [*i. e.* his] people, and divided them into three

companies, and laid wait in the field, and looked, and behold, the people *were* come [coming] forth out of the city; and he rose up against them, and smote them.

44 And Abimelech, and the company [companies] that *was* [were] with him, rushed forward,<sup>1</sup> and stood [placed themselves] in the entering [at the entrance] of the gate of the city: and the two *other* companies ran [advanced] upon *all the people*

45 that *were* in the fields, and slew them. And Abimelech fought against the city all that day: and he took the city, and slew the people that *was* therein, and beat

46 [tore] down the city, and sowed it with salt. And when all the men [lords] of the tower of Shechem heard *that*, they entered into an [the] hold<sup>2</sup> of the house of the

47 god Berith [house of El-Berith]. And it was told Abimelech, that all the men

48 [lords] of the tower of Shechem were gathered together [there]. And Abimelech gat him up to Mount Zalmon, he and all the people that *were* with him; and Abimelech took an axe in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it [lifted it up], and laid *it* on his shoulder, and said unto the people that *were* with

49 him, What ye have seen me do, make haste, *and do as I have done*. And all the people likewise cut down [off] every man his bough, and followed Abimelech, and put *them* to the hold, and set the hold on fire upon<sup>3</sup> them: so that [and] all the

50 men of the tower of Shechem died also, about a thousand men and women. Then went Abimelech to Thebez, and encamped against [laid siege to] Thebez, and took it.

51 But there was a strong tower within [in the midst of] the city, and thither fled all the men and women, and all they [the lords] of the city, and shut *it* to [after] them,

52 and gat them up to the top [roof] of the tower. And Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it, and went hard [approached] unto the door of the tower

53 to burn it with fire. And a certain woman cast a piece of a [cast an upper] millstone upon Abimelech's head, and all to [omit: all to]<sup>4</sup> brake his skull<sup>5</sup> [to pieces].

54 Then he called hastily unto the young man his armour-bearer, and said unto him, Draw thy sword, and slay me [put me to death], that men say not of me, A woman

55 slew him. And his young man thrust him through, and he died. And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they departed every man unto his

56 place. Thus God rendered [caused to return] the wickedness of Abimelech, which

57 he did unto his father, in slaying his seventy brethren: And all the evil of the men of Shechem did God render [cause to return] upon their heads: and upon them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 44. — פָּצְצוּ: spread out, *sc.* in hostile array. The same word occurs ver. 33; and in both places seems to contrast the expanded form of a body of men freely advancing, with its contraction when lying in ambush. The verse is somewhat difficult. Dr. Cassel renders it as follows: "And Abimelech and the companies that were with him, spread themselves out. Part stood [took their stand] at the entrance of the gate of the city, and two companies threw themselves on all that were in the field, and slew them." — *Ta.*]

[2 Ver. 46. — חֲרִיב. The meaning of this word is doubtful. Our author renders it *Halle*; De Wette, *Veste*, strong hold; Keil suggests *Zwinger* (cf. *arz*, from *arceo*), citadel, fortress; while according to Bertheau, ver. 49 (where he would read: and they put the boughs on the חֲרִיב, and infer thence that the place bearing this name was *low*), "rather implies a cellar-like place, some sort of hollow." Cf. 1 Sam. xiii. 6, the only other passage where the word occurs, and where it is conjoined with caves and clefts of the rocks." — *Ta.*]

[3 Ver. 49. — עֲלֵיהֶם: Cassel, "with them," *i. e.* the boughs. But this rendering will scarcely find favor. De Wette: "over them," *i. e.* the people in the חֲרִיב. — *Ta.*]

[4 Ver. 53. — "All to brake," is old English for "entirely brake." Cf. Webster, *Dict.*, under "all," adv. — *Ta.*]

[5 Ver. 53. — חֲרָבָתוֹ, from חָרַב, is undoubtedly to be read חֲרָבָתוֹ, which reading, according to Bertheau and Keil, is found in the edition of R. Norzi, Mantua, 1742-44. — *Ta.*]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Vers. 42-44. The people went out into the field. Sin is blind, and must be, for only repentance opens the eyes. The people of Shechem, notwithstanding their treasurable practices, actually think that the matter is now settled, and that Abimelech is content with the banishment of Gaal. It is a constant characteristic of the natural man, that he either does not hear his conscience, or seeks

to silence it by persuading himself that the guilt to which he shuts his own eyes is also unseen by others. He thinks only of sin and its pleasure, not of its punishment. The Shechemites have forgotten, to their own hurt, what Jotham told them. The thorn-bush emits fire, and consumes those who despise it. Abimelech only tarries in his concealed height, until he has inspired the foolish Shechemites with confidence. With true Punic strategy, he allures them to the open fields, there to attend

to their labor, as if all were peace, and nothing more were to be feared. Caught in the snare, their retreat is cut off. One of Abimelech's companies holds the gate, while others deal destruction to all in the fields. Similar strategies are told of Hamelech, the Carthaginian, against Agrigentum, and of Hannibal against Saguntum (Frontinus, lib. iii. 10, 1).

Ver. 45. He destroyed the city and sowed it with salt. Notwithstanding Abimelech's sanguinary disposition, it would be difficult to account for his savage treatment of Shechem, if we did not remember that the city stood in the covenant of Baal-berith with him. The very money that assisted him to the throne, had been taken from the temple of this god. Now, among oriental nations, as among others, infidelity to covenant obligations was the greatest of crimes. The God of Israel, also, who made his divine covenant with the nation, says (Deut. iv. 23): "Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of Jehovah your God, which he made with you. For Jehovah your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God." He utters the threat (Lev. xxvi. 25): "I will bring the sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant." In the book of the prophet Ezekiel (ch. xvii. 15) we read: "He hath broken the covenant, and shall he be delivered?"

This covenant with Jehovah, Abimelech has desecrated in the most horrible manner. Does he fear no punishment for that transgression? But the natural man, who lightly breaks the covenant of his God, nevertheless claims the terrible right of punishing those who have failed in duty toward himself, with a severity greater than that threatened by God. The breach of a covenant born of blood and sin, is visited with vengeance like a "consuming fire." Shechem is razed to the ground, and salt is strewn over its site. The usual explanation of this proceeding, of which no other instance occurs,<sup>1</sup> is, that by it Abimelech intends to declare Shechem an unfruitful land, a land of salt, as it were (מלח). But this explanation, although accepted by all recent expositors, does not appear to be satisfactory. For to make the land unfruitful, he neither intends, nor, if he did, were he able; for no one will think of such a salting as would actually bring about this result.<sup>2</sup> He can only intend to say, that this city, being unfaithful to its covenants, and forgetful of its oaths, has ceased to exist, and is never more to be known as a city. When Joshua inflicted a similar destruction on Jericho, he swore that it should never be rebuilt (Josh. vi. 26). Abimelech makes the same declaration in the act of strewing salt; for salt is the symbol of an oath, just as among all nations, not excepting the dull tribes of Siberia, it was the symbol of covenants. The salt which he strewed over Shechem intimated both the cause and the perpetuity of the vengeance inflicted. A fate still worse, but less deserved, was suffered by

the descendants of the Milesian Branchidæ who had betrayed the treasures of the temple of Apollo, at Didymæ, into the hands of Xerxes, and had obtained through him a city in Persia. Alexander, coming upon this city, gave it up to the vengeance of the Milesians in his army. These destroyed it to its very foundations, killed all the inhabitants, so that not a trace of them remained, and tore up the groves by their roots, so that, as Curtius says (vii. 5, 34), "*vasta solitudo et sterilis humus linqueretur.*" Shechem's destruction was not so bad as that: and it was afterwards rebuilt (1 Kgs. xii. 25).

Vers. 46-49. And the lords of the Tower of Shechem heard of it. Still more cowardly than that of the Shechemites, is the conduct of the men of the Tower of Shechem. They venture no resistance at all, but run for safety to the temple-asylum of El-Berith. The House of El, here mentioned, cannot well be the same with the House of Baal hitherto spoken of. The matter probably stands thus: Under the covenant entered into by Israel and the heathen, both parties served the Covenant-Deity, the Israelites in the temple of El-Berith, the heathen in that of Baal-Berith. Aside from this difference of locality, the worship was perhaps identical; and the covenant itself was already a sin. It would however be an error, to suppose that during such times of apostasy all distinction between Israel and the heathen ceased to exist. Abimelech still continued to be an Israelite; and the inhabitants of the Tower of Shechem probably expected to find greater security in the House of El-Berith than could be looked for in the asylum of a wholly heathen temple. The place to which they retired, is called מִצֵּדָה, and is probably a hall of the temple<sup>3</sup> (like מִצְבֵּה, used to denote a special part of the temple at Jerusalem). The sanctuary privileges of temples were very great among all nations; and, as is well known with reference to the temple at Ephesus, were not seldom misused. In order to destroy Pausanias without violating the rights of sanctuary, the doors of the temple of Minerva, at Sparta, in which he had taken refuge, were built up, and the roof taken off "that under the open sky he might more quickly perish" (Corn. Nepos, *Paus.* ch. 5). Abimelech resorted to more terrible means. He ascended the neighboring wooded hill, Mount Zalmon—so named from its forest-shades,—and hewed off a multitude of boughs, himself being the first to swing the axe.

(The plural, מִצֵּדָה, stands for all the axes that were used.) These boughs were piled up about the building, and all its inmates perished in the flames. A like deed is related by Herodotus (iv. 184) of Arcesilaus: a number of Cynæans having taken refuge in a tower, he heaped wood around it, and burned them to death. It is a species of violence which, especially among the northern nations, has been practiced oftener than

<sup>1</sup> [In Scripture, the author means, of course. The following instances in comparatively recent times, probably mere imitations of what from this passage is usually assumed to have been an ancient custom, are noted by Wordsworth: "When Milan was taken in A. D. 1162, it was sown with salt" (*Sigonius*); and the house of Admiral Coligny, murdered in the massacre of St. Bartholomew, A. D. 1572, was, by the command of Charles IX., king of France, sown with salt."—*Tr.*]

<sup>2</sup> [Wordsworth does however: "Sowed it with salt, to destroy its fertility, and to make it barren for ever, like Solon, comp. Pliny, xxxi. 7." But this idea is not at all necessary to the common explanation (as given by Bertheau,

Keil, Bush) that the act was designed symbolically to turn the city into a salt-desert. Our author's explanation does not conflict with that of his predecessors, but rather completes it.—*Tr.*]

<sup>3</sup> The extent of the temple building which this implies is not unparalleled. The temple of Diana in Samos was so large as to afford sanctuary to the 300 Cœrean boys whom Periander dispatched to Alyattes, king of Lydia, for eunuchs, and yet leave room for choirs of Samian youth to execute certain religious dances before them, ingeniously invented as a means of conveying food to them (Herod. iii. 48).

once,—as, for instance, by king Olaf (Tryggveson), who hurried in this manner all the warlocks of his land (Snorro, *Heingskringla*, Saga vi. ch. 69).

In connection with these events, a number of topographical references to the region of Shechem, which prove that the narrator was an eye-witness, but which although alluding to permanent landmarks, as mountain, valley, and forest, are yet not easily traced. Migdal (Tower of) Shechem, however, may be confidently assumed to be the same as Beth (House of) Millo (vers. 6, 20). Abimelech's wrath against it is thus readily understood; for its inhabitants had taken part in his election at the Monument-Oak, and had now doubtless made common cause with those of Lower Shechem. For it is perhaps safe to assume that the places were related to each other as Upper and Lower Shechem. Migdal Shechem, as the Acropolis, was a little city by itself, and might have ventured on further resistance; but its people preferred to pray for mercy, which Abimelech was not the man to exercise.

Vers. 50-53. **And Abimelech went to Thebez.** Since the course of the narrative leads to the inference that Abimelech's march upon this city formed part of his vengeance on Shechem, its location must be sought for at a very short distance from that place. The opinion of certain expositors and travellers (Robinson, Berggren, cf. Ritter, xv. 448 [Gage's Transl. ii. 341]), who identify Thebez with the modern Tubās at the head of Wady el-Maliḥ, does not therefore appear to be altogether certain. To me, Tubās has appeared more suitable for Tabbath (ch. vii. 22). Thebez must have been closely connected with Shechem. Since, in accordance with Jotham's parable, the two miserable associates, Abimelech and Shechem, perish by each other, and since Abimelech finds his end at Thebez, the inhabitants of the latter must have been among those who at first patronized Abimelech. Thebez was built in circular form, like the Grecian Thebe, for it had its Tower in the centre. Its inhabitants preferred desperate battle to mercy; but they were already on the verge of destruction, when Abimelech (*"inter confertissimos violentissime dimicans,"* fighting furiously in the thickest of the crowd, as Justin says of Pyrrhus) was struck on the head by a mill-stone, which crushed his skull. It appears that the inhabitants of Thebez were prepared for a lengthy siege, since along with provisions they had also brought a hand-mill into the tower. Such a mill consisted of a movable upper (מַלְחָה, wagon, Eng. runner, Germ. *Läufer*), and of an immovable, nether stone (מַלְחָה תַּתְּיָתֵירָה), on which the other turned. The duty of grinding generally devolved on women. Abimelech falls, as the Jewish expositors say, by a stone, as on a stone he had murdered his brothers. Other usurpers also have met with the same fate. When in 1190, impious men sought to destroy the poor Jews, who had taken refuge in the royal castle at York, one of the ringleaders of the mob fell, crushed by a stone (Milman, *Hist. of the Jews*, iii. 242).

Ver. 54. **That men say not, A woman slew him.** Poor Abimelech, in the moment of his fall, thinks of nothing save that his death will be ascribed to a woman; an end which has at all times been considered inglorious. To his latest breath, men were to be deceived by appearances. For though his attendant gave him the finishing stroke, it was nevertheless the woman that killed him. And, as 2 Sam. xi. 21 shows, he was not

able to avert the dreaded infamy. Still, this utterance also goes to show the warlike spirit of the fallen man. Energy, valor, and iron strength were inherited characteristics of the son, not unworthy of his heroic father. He towers, at all events, far above the cowardly Shechemites, the braggart Gaal, and the intriguing Zebul. If ambition and unrestrained fury had not stupefied his conscience; if, like Gideon, he had learned to serve and to suffer; had faithfully heeded the call of his God, and had not sought to found by the sword what only God's Spirit can establish, it might have been said of him, as of the noblest: "he judged, delivered his people." As it was, he is never even named by the title "King" which he arrogated to himself; and Jewish tradition exalts the heathen king Abimelech of Abraham's time, above the valiant son of Gideon.

Vers. 55-57. **When the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead.** In Abimelech's death, also, we may read the fate of tyrants. His attendant thrusts him through without hesitation, and the dead chieftain is forsaken by all. The interest created by his person and his wages, is gone. How much more beautiful is the otherwise so tragical death of Saul! His attendant, influenced by reverence, refuses to kill him, and finally follows him in voluntary death. The songs of David celebrate his memory: Abimelech's epitaph is his brother Jotham's curse!

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Compare on p. 147.

[BP. HALL: O the just successions of the revenges of God! Gideon's ephod is punished with the blood of his sons; the blood of his sons is shed by the procurement of the Shechemites; the blood of the Shechemites is shed by Abimelech; the blood of Abimelech is spilt by a woman. The retaliations of God are sure and just.—THE SAME: The pursued Shechemites fly to the house of their god Berith: now they are safe; that place is at once a fort and a sanctuary. Whither should we fly in our distress, but to our God? And now this refuge shall teach them what a god they have served.—THE SAME: Now, according to the prophecy of Jotham, a fire goes out of the bramble, and consumes these cedars, and their eternal flames begin in the house of their Berith. The confusion of wicked men rises out of the false deities which they have doted on.—HENRY: What inventions men have to destroy one another!—THE SAME: About 1,000 men and women perished in these flames, many of whom, probably, were no way concerned in the quarrel, nor meddled with either side; men of factious turbulent spirits, perish not alone in their iniquity, but involve many more, that follow them in their simplicity, in the same calamity with them.—WORDSWORTH: Many powerful enemies of God and of his people, after victorious acts of oppression, have been overthrown at last by weak instruments, even by women: Sisera, by Deborah and Jael; Haman, by Esther; Holofernes, by Judith; and the Church, by the power of the Seal, overcomes the world.—BUSH: The end of Abimelech suggests the remark, 1. That they who thirst for blood, God will at last give them their own blood to drink. 2. The weak, in God's hand, can confound the mighty; and those who walk in pride, He is able to abase. 3. They who in life consulted only their pride and ambition, will usually die as they

lived, more solicitous that their honor should be preserved on earth, than that their souls be saved from hell. (4.) The methods proud men take to se-

cure a great name, often only serve to perpetuate their infamy. — T.R.]

## SIXTH SECTION.

TWO JUDGES IN QUIET, PEACEFUL TIMES: TOLA OF ISSACHAR AND JAIR THE GILEADITE.

### *The Judgeships of Tola and Jair.*

#### CHAPTER X. 1-5.

- 1 And after Abimelech there arose to defend [deliver] Israel, Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir in mount Ephraim.
- 2 And he judged Israel twenty and three years, and died, and was buried in Shamir.
- 3 And after him arose Jair, a [the] Gileadite, and judged Israel twenty and two years.
- 4 And he had thirty sons [,] that rode on thirty ass colts, and they had thirty cities, [those] which are called Havoth-jair [the circles of Jair] unto this day, which are in
- 5 the land of Gilead. And Jair died, and was buried in Camon.

#### EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 1. And after Abimelech there arose Tola, the son of Puah, the son of Dodo. The record of this man's life contains no stirring actions, like those of Abimelech, but tells of something better. He "delivered" and "judged" Israel. This, however, always presupposes renewed consciousness of sin on the part of Israel, and return to the living God. It is probable that the horrible deeds and the terrible end of Abimelech and Shechem made such an impression upon the conscience of Israel, as to open the way for deliverance. Under this view, the words "after Abimelech" receive a deeper significance; and the reason why the history of that personage was so copiously narrated becomes still more evident. That which at other times was the result of terrors from without, is this time brought about by the civil catastrophe within.

The deliverer's name was "Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo." The mention of father and grandfather both, is unusual, and occurs in the case of no other Judge. It was therefore natural, that already at an early date, and also, it would seem, by the Masora, "ben Dodo" was taken appellatively, as meaning "Son of his Uncle or Cousin." The "his" in that case must refer to Abimelech; and Tola would have to be regarded as the son of a brother or a sister of Gideon. The son of Gideon's brother, he cannot have been (although this is just the relation indicated by ancient expositions, cf. the *πατραδελφον* of the LXX.); for he belonged not to Manassch, but to Issachar. If a sister of Gideon had married a man of the tribe of Issachar, this person might indeed have been called an uncle (*dod*) of Abimelech. But if such were the relation, is it not more likely that the writer would have said, "Son of the sister of

Jerubbaal?" The names Tola and Puah, as borne by sons of Issachar, are already found in Gen. xlii. 13. They became established in the families of that tribe, and frequently recur. It was just so in German families, especially of the Middle Ages. Particular names were peculiar to particular families. (Instead of פִּוּחָה, Puah, we have פִּוּחָה, Puvah, in Gen. xlii. 13 and Num. xxvi. 23, though not in all MSS. 1 Chr. vii. 1 has פִּוּחָה, Puah.) These names indicate a certain industry, which, it may be inferred, must have been carried on in Issachar. Tola (תוֹלָה) is the Kermes-worm (*coccus ilicis*), from which the crimson, or deep scarlet color (תִּשְׁבֵּית נֶשֶׁךְ), of which we read so much in connection with the tabernacle, was derived; and Puah is Chaldee for *rubia tinctorum*, or madder red (cf. Buxtorff, *sub voce*). We shall not err, perhaps, if we conjecture that the third name also is added because of its agreement in meaning with the two preceding. For Dodo, if we derive it from דֹּדָה, *dud*, instead of דֹּדָה, *dod*, cousin, means "pot," or "vessel," a prominent utensil in the preparation of dyes.<sup>1</sup> Names of this kind, it is well known, are not unfrequent in the East. Hammer (*Namen der Araber*) even adduces the name *Führ*, which signifies the stone used for grinding perfumes.

He dwelt in Shamir, on Mount Ephraim. The centre of his judicial activity was permanently fixed in Ephraim. As to Shamir, this name (on its import, compare my treatise *Schamir*, Erf. 1856) may be identified with Shemer, name of the owner of the hill on which king Omri afterwards built Shomeron, Samaria (1 Kgs. xvi. 24).

Vers. 3-5. And after him arose Jair, the

<sup>1</sup> On the vessels excavated in the sandstone, which were used in the preparation of the purple dye at Tyre, see

Wilde, *Voyage in the Mediterranean*, Dublin, 1840, ii 148 ff. quoted by Ritter, xvii. 372.

**Gileadite.** Just as Tola was a family-name in Issachar, so was Jair in Gilead. The ancestor of this Jair was the son of Manasseh, whose name was associated with the acquisition of the greatest part of the territory in possession of the eastern half-tribe of Manasseh. Machir, it is stated, Num. xxxii. 39-41, took Gilead, and "Jair, son of Manasseh," the "circles," which were afterwards called the "circles of Jair." It has already been pointed out in connection with our explanation of the name Hivite (Chivi), that *chavah*, (plur. *chavoth*, Eng. Ver. *Havoth*), means "circle," from the form in which those villages to which it is applied were laid out (see on ch. iii. 3). It would, therefore, involve a twofold error to explain Havoth-Jair, as modern expositors do, by making it analogous to such German names as *Eisleben* and *Aschersleben*; for, in the first place, *chavah* does not mean "life" here; and, secondly, in such names as the above, the German *leben* does not mean *vita* but *mansio*.

By these "circles of Jair" we are evidently to understand the whole of the present western Hauran, reaching as far as Jebel Hauran, for Kenath (the present Kenawath) is reckoned among the sixty cities of Jair (1 Chr. ii. 23; 1 Kgs. iv. 13). Wetzstein's conjecture (*Hauran*, p. 101), that these cities are only sixty tent-villages of the nomadic order, is by no means to be accepted; for the books of Kings and Chronicles are conversant with great cities, with walls and brazen bars, in the region that "pertained to Jair." The objection that if such cities had existed, the Assyrians could not have subjected the two and a half tribes so readily, is not borne out. In the first place, because the accounts of this conquest are very brief and scanty; and in the second place, because the history of all ages teaches us, that when the Spirit has left a people, neither fortresses nor "steep heights" avail to detain the enemy. At all events, the Assyrian successes do not prove that the architectural remains of the Hauran cannot in their elements be referred back to the time of the Amorites and Israelites. Without at present entering into any discussion of this subject, we hold the contrary to be highly probable, even though, at the places which would here come into consideration, more recent buildings bear the stamp of more recent times. Indeed, it seems to me, that just as it was possible to identify Kenath, Salcah, Golan, etc., so the name Jair also is in existence to this day. I find it in the name of the city called "Aere" by Burekhardt, "Eera" by Seetzen, and "Ire" by Wetzstein. It is still the seat of an influential (Druse) chieftain. Ritter (xv. 944) warns us against confounding it with the Aera which the Itinerary of Antonine puts in the place of the present Szanamein; but it were more proper to say that the repeated occurrence of the name, should be regarded as evidence that the whole region was once called "Jair's circles."

The narrator's remark that the cities of Jair "are called Havoth Jair unto this day," has been supposed to conflict with the statement of the Pentateuch, wherein this name is derived from the first Jair (cf. Hengst., *Pent.* ii. 193). With regard to some other names of places, such an exchange of

one derivation for another, may perhaps be made out; but here it is quite impossible that one should have taken place. The narrator, who keeps the Pentateuch constantly before his eyes, designs only to remind the reader of what was there stated. In themselves, his words would have been entirely insufficient to explain the origin of the designation *Havoth-Jair*, seeing the discourse was about "cities" (עִירִים).

Moreover, the number of these cities, at a later date, was reckoned at sixty, whereas here mention is made of only thirty. The sentence is indeed peculiar on account of the double לָיִר; for which reason a few codices read it but once. But the word does not bear the same sense in both cases. The second לָיִר, introduces an explanatory clause; so that the meaning of the sentence is this: "thirty cities belonged to them (לָיִר), of those (לָיִר)<sup>1</sup> which (the relative אֲשֶׁר is frequently omitted) are called Havoth-Jair unto this day." The closing words of this sentence ("unto this day") are evidently a mere verbal citation from Dent. iii. 14; for no other occasion exists here, where the question is only of Jair's distinguished position, for their use. Jair, by his strength and virtue, had diffused his family over one half of the entire district, with which his ancient progenitor had long ago associated his own name.

And he had thirty sons, who rode on thirty asses, and had thirty cities. The paronomasia between עִירִים, asses, and the rare form עִירִים for "cities," authorizes the conjecture that we have here a sentence from a song of praise in honor of Jair and his prosperous fortune. That which is celebrated is, not that he possessed thirty asses — what would that be to a man who had thirty cities? — but that he was the father of thirty sons, all of whom enjoyed the honor and distinction implied in the statement that they rode upon asses. They rode, that is to say, not merely as men of quality — the usual explanation, — but as chiefs, governors, and judges. It was peculiar to such persons especially that they made use of the ass, as the animal of peace. Their very appearance on this animal, was expressive of their calling to reconcile and pacify. The sons of Jairs judged their thirty cities. This is something not given to all rich fathers; it was a happiness which not even Samuel the Priest was destined to enjoy.

Jair was buried in Camon, doubtless one of the thirty cities of Hauran. The farther and more thorough investigation is carried in the country east of the Jordan, the more instructive will its results become. Perhaps we may take the Sahwed el-Kamh, on Wetzstein's map, not far from Ire (Jair), for the Camon of the text. However little may be told of many of the Judges of Israel, of their place of burial information is given. The whole land was to be, as it were, a memorial hall, by which the people are reminded of the men who brought help in distress, when they repented, and which may also teach them to know that all men,

1 [In the text, Dr. Cassel renders לָיִר by "those,"

while here he writes "of those." The first rendering may be defended, but the second is as doubtful as it is unnecessary. If the intention be to avoid all appearance of conflict with the Pentateuch, this is just as effectually reached by the unimpeachable version of De Wette: *Man nennet sie Jair's Dörfer bis auf diesen Tag* — they are called Jair's

Villages unto this day. לָיִרֵי is the indeterminate 3d per. plural, and (as is remarked by Bertheau and Keil) does not at all affirm that the name was now first given. לָיִר is the dative of that to which the name is given, and stands first for the sake of emphasis; "they had thirty cities precisely those cities people call Havoth-Jair." — Tr.]

however valiant, die, and that only the one, eternal God survives in deathless existence. But how inadequate monuments and sepulchres are to preserve energy and piety among the people, that the following section once more teaches.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Two judges in times of quiet. After the terrible storm, comes a calm. For half a century Tola and Jair judge Israel, without committing frightful wrongs, or performing enviable deeds. The greatness of Gideon's times, and the baseness of Abimelech's, are both exhausted. An unknown, but happy, generation lives and works in peace under pious Judges. No enemy threatens, the word of God is quick and active, the country prospers, commerce flourishes. A quiet life is rich in seeds. Amid the silence of repose, the germs of spring prepare themselves. It is a type of the Kingdom in the future, when through the eternal calm only the anthems of adoring choirs will be heard, like the voices of nightingales resounding through the night.

So, it is not given to every one to live a quiet peaceful life, undisturbed by political and social alarms. Let him who enjoys it, not envy the fame with which publicity surrounds great names. In quietness and confidence shall be your strength says the prophet (Isa. xxx. 15).

STARKE: To govern a nation well in times of peace, is not less praiseworthy than to carry on wars and overcome enemies.—LISCO: Tola saved his people, not indeed by wars and victims, but by right and justice, by the concord and peace which he restored in Israel.

[SCOTT: The removal of hardened sinners, by a righteous God, often makes way for reformation and public tranquillity, and proves a great mercy to those who survive.—WORDSWORTH: The time in which they [*i. e.* Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon] judged Israel amounted to seventy years, but the Holy Spirit does not record a single act done by any one of them; and thus He leads us to look forward and upward to another life, and to that heavenly chronicle which is written with indelible characters in the memory of God Himself, and is ever open to his divine eye.—TR.]

## SEVENTH SECTION.

THE OPPRESSION OF THE MIDIANITES. JEPHTHAH, THE JUDGE OF THE VOW.

*Renewed apostasy and punishment. Awakening and repentance.*

#### CHAPTER X. 6-16.

- 6 And the children [sons] of Israel did evil again [continued to do evil] in the sight of the Lord [Jehovah], and served [the] Baalim, and [the] Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria [Aram], and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children [sons] of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the
- 7 Lord [Jehovah], and served not Him. And the anger of the Lord [Jehovah] was hot [kindled] against Israel, and he sold [delivered] them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children [sons] of Ammon. And that year they vexed and oppressed the children [sons] of Israel eighteen years,<sup>1</sup> all the children of Israel that *were* on the other side Jordan in the land of the Amorites,
- 9 which *is* in Gilead. Moreover, the children [sons] of Ammon passed over [the] Jordan, to fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house
- 10 of Ephraim: so that Israel was sore distressed.<sup>2</sup> And the children [sons] of Israel cried unto the Lord [Jehovah], saying, We have sinned against thee, both [namely], because we have forsaken our God, and also [omit: also; read: have] served [the]
- 11 Baalim. And the Lord [Jehovah] said unto the children [sons] of Israel, *Did* not I deliver you from the Egyptians [from Mizraim, *i. e.* Egypt], and from the Amorites,
- 12 from the children [sons] of Ammon, and from the Philistines?<sup>3</sup> The Zidonians also [And when the Sidonians], and the Amalekites, and the Maonites did oppress
- 13 you; [.] and ye cried to me, and [then] I delivered you out of their hand. Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more.
- 14 Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen: let them deliver you in the time
- 15 of your tribulation [distress]. And the children [sons] of Israel said unto the Lord [Jehovah], We have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee;



1<sup>c</sup> deliver us only, we pray thee, this day. And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord [Jehovah]: and his soul was grieved for [endured no longer] the misery of Israel.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 8. — Dr. Cassel translates this clause as follows (reading  $\text{וַיִּצְרֹקְהֶם}$ , instead of  $\text{וַיִּצְרֹקֵם}$ , see the Commentary below): "And they vexed and plagued the sons of Israel, as this year, eighteen years long," etc. The better way is to repeat the idea of the verbs after "eighteen years," thus: "And they broke and crushed the sons of Israel in that year; eighteen years did they oppress all the sons of Israel who were beyond the Jordan," etc.  $\text{וַיִּצְרֹק}$  and  $\text{וַיִּצְרֹקֵם}$  come from the same root, and are synonyms used to strengthen the idea. — Tr.]

[2 Ver. 9. — Literally: "and it became exceedingly strait to Israel," cf. ch. ii. 15. On the use of the fem. gender ( $\text{וַיִּצְרֹקֶהָ}$ , from  $\text{וַיִּצְרֹק}$ ) in impersonal constructions, see Green, *Gram.*, 243, 3. — Tr.]

[3 Ver. 11. — For Dr. Cassel's rendering of this verse, see the comments on it. The sentence is anacoluthic in the original; the construction being changed at the beginning of the next verse. — Tr.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 6. And the sons of Israel continued to do the evil in the sight of Jehovah. Sin and forgiveness are the hinges of all history, especially of the history of Israel, including in that term the spiritual Israel of modern times. They follow each other like night and morning. As soon as the prayers and faith of a great man cease from among the people, and the earth is heaped over his grave, the new generation breaks loose, like an unrestrained youth. After Jair's death, idolatry spreads far and wide. Israel plays the harlot, in the east with Aram, in the west with the Phœnicians, in the southeast with Moab and Ammon, in the southwest with the Philistines. Those gods are named first, whose people have already oppressed Israel, and have been turned back by men of God. First, the Baalim and Ashtaroth, whose service Gideon especially, the Jerubbaal, overthrew (ch. vi. 25); next, the gods of Aram, whose king was defeated by the hero Othniel; then, the gods of Zidon, the mention of whom — since Zidon, the metropolis, stood for all Phœnicia, *i. e.* Canaan — reminds us of the victory of Deborah and Barak over Jabin, king of Canaan; and finally, the gods of Moab, smitten by Ehud. Israel served these gods, although they were unable to stand before the eternal God. And beside these, it now also serves the gods of the Ammonites and Philistines. These also will first cause it to experience oppression; but then, though only after long penance, become the occasion of divine displays of grace and mercy to Israel. In truth, this "young" Israel serves all gods, except only the living and the true. It runs after every superstition, every delusion, every sensual gratification, every self-deception, but forgets the truth and peace of God. It seeks false friends, and forsakes the true.

Vers. 7-10. And He delivered them into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the sons of Ammon. As far as their sufferings and conflicts with the western nations are concerned, these are related subsequently under the history of Samson. The chastisement which they experience by means of Ammon, leads the way. This falls especially upon the people east of the Jordan, the neighbors of Ammon; and the enervating and

weakening effects of sin and unbelief become clearly manifest in the fact that one of the most valiant of the Israelitish tribes, Gilead, the home, as it were, of heroes, is not able successfully to oppose the enemy. Israel is pressed, plagued, plundered; "as in the first year,<sup>1</sup> so through eighteen years"

(for  $\text{וַיִּצְרֹקֵם}$  read  $\text{וַיִּצְרֹקֵם}$ ). The inflictions to which they were obliged to submit one year, the spoliation of their harvests, the plundering of their villages, the imposition of tribute, are repeated year after year, eighteen times. The manifest weakness of Israel, the dismemberment of the nation, so that one tribe finds no help from any other (ch. xii. 2), emboldens the oppressor. Ammon passes over the Jordan, and attacks Israel in the heart of its most powerful tribes, without meeting resistance. But how came Israel into such a condition of disruption? Whence this inability to unite its forces against the overbearing enemy? This question has already been answered in ver. 6. The people has forsaken the one God, and worships many idol gods. Falling away from the national faith, it has fallen into the disintegration of egoism. The tribes are divided by their special idols, their respective evil consciences, and by local selfishness. Only one thing is common to all, — despondency and powerlessness; for the ideal spirit of the theocratic people, the source of union and courage, is wanting. Hence, after long distress, they all share in a common feeling of repentance. They come now to the tabernacle, long neglected — for while attending at near and local idol temples, they have forgotten to visit the House of God — and say: we have sinned.

Vers. 11, 12. And Jehovah said to the sons of Israel, Not from Mizraim (Egypt), and from the Amorite, from the sons of Ammon, and from the Philistines! It is the Priest who answers the people, in the name of God, through Urim and Thummim, as in ch. i. 1. It has been observed that in ver. 6 seven different national idols are enumerated as having been served by Israel, and that in vers. 11 and 12 seven nations are named, out of whose hand Israel had been delivered. The number seven is symbolical of consummation and completion. All false gods, whom Israel has foolishly served, are included with those that are

<sup>1</sup> [On this translation, see note 1 under "Textual and Grammatical." Dr. Cassel evidently takes  $\text{וַיִּצְרֹקֵם}$  "this year," to mean the first year of the oppression. Others (Usher, Bush, etc.) make it the last year both of the oppression and of Jair's life. But this is altogether un-

likely. Hitherto, apostasy and servitude have always followed the death of the Judge. If the present case were an exception, the narrator would certainly have noted it as such. The use of the word "this," would perhaps be quite plain, if we could have a glance at the sources from which the narrator here draws. — Tr.]

named in ver. 6, from the northeast and southeast, the northwest and southwest. Such, undoubtedly, is likewise the sense of vers. 11 and 12. To Israel's prayer for deliverance from Ammon in the land of the Amorite, and from the Philistines, God replies, reproachfully: that Israel bears itself as if it had sinned for the first time, and asked deliverance in consideration of its repentance. But, says God, from of old I have liberated you from *all* the nations that surround you, — from Egypt first, and from every nation that troubled you — east, west, north, and south, — in turn. The voice of God speaks not in the style of narrative, but in the tone of impassioned discourse. Under general descriptions, it comprehends, with rhetorical vigor, special occurrences. It introduces the Ammonites, Philistines, and Amorites, immediately after Egypt, because these nations are now in question. Have I not already, since your exodus from Egypt, given you peace, even from these very Philistines (Ex. xiii. 17), Ammonites (Num. xxi. 24), and Amorites (Num. xxi. 21 ff.)? Thereupon, the discourse passes over into another construction; for from the ancient part it turns now to events of more recent times. In those early times, when Moses led you, you saw no oppression, but only victory. Later, when Zidonians, Amalekites, and Maonites oppressed you, I helped you at your cry. All three names indicate only in a general way, the quarters from which the more recent attacks had come. Since Joshua's death, Israel had experienced only one attack from the north and northeast, all others had come from the east and southwest. That from the north, was the act of Jabin, king of Canaan. It is true, that in the narrative of Barak's victory, the name Zidonians does not occur; but Zidon is in emphatic language the representative, the mother, as she is called, of Phœnicia, *i. e.* Canaan. In a like general sense do Amalek and Maon here stand for those eastern tribes from whose predatory incursions Israel had suffered; for Amalek, the earliest and most implacable enemy of Israel, assisted both Midian and Moab in their attacks. Thus also, the mention of Maon becomes intelligible. Modern expositors (even Keil) consider the Septuagint reading *Maḏidu* (Midian) to be the correct one. We cannot adopt this view; for this reason, if no other, that difficult readings are to be preferred to plain ones. Maon is the name of the southeastern wilderness, familiar to us from David's history. The name has evidently been preserved in the Maon of Arabia Petraea (cf. Ritter, xiv. 1005). Amalek and Maon represent the Bedouin tribes, who from this quarter attacked Israel. Every point from which Israel could be assailed has thus been included; for the first three nations, Philistines, Ammonites, and Amorites, range from the southwest to the northeast, just as the other three, Zidonians, Amalekites, and Maonites, reach from the northwest to the southeast.

Vers. 13-16. **Go, and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen.** From all nations, says the voice of God, have I liberated you. It has been demonstrated to you that I am your true Deliverer, and that all the tribes round about you are your enemies, especially when they perceive that you have forsaken Me. Every part of your land teaches this lesson; and yet you apostatize always anew. I have chosen you without any merit on your part, to be a great nation, and you have left Me; go, therefore, in this your time of need, and get you help from the idol gods whom you have chosen in my place. This answer cuts the sharper, because the idols to whose service Is-

rael apostatized, were identical with the very nations by whom they were oppressed. For every idol was national or local in its character. God speaks here with a sorrow like that of a human father who addresses an inconsiderate child. Nothing but a sharp goad of reprehension and threatening will drive it to serious and thorough consideration. But though inconsiderate, it nevertheless continues to be a child. The father, though for the present he disown it, cannot in good earnest intend to abandon it altogether. And, in truth, Israel did not miscalculate. When they not only confessed their sins, but even without any visible assistance, imitated Gideon, and in faith removed their idol altars, the anger of their Father was at an end. The phrase *וַתִּתְּשֶׁר נַפְשׁוֹ*, elsewhere employed of men (cf. Num. xxi. 4, where the people find the way of the wilderness too long), is here applied with artless beauty to Israel's tender Father. "His soul became too short" for the misery of Israel, *i. e.* the misery of the penitent people endured too long for Him. He could no longer bring himself to cherish anger against them. The love of God is no rigid human consistency: it is eternal freedom. Man's parental love is its image, albeit an image obscured by sin. The parable of the Prodigal Son, especially, gives us some conception of the wonderful inconsistency of God, by which after chastisement He recalls the penitent sinner to himself. Nothing but the freedom of God's love — ever right as well as free — secures the world's existence. Love — as only God loves; love, which loves for God's sake; love, that pardons the penitent offender seven and seventy times, — is true consistency. Put away the strange gods, and the withered stock will become green again. This Israel experiences anew, and first in Gilead.

This notice, however brief, of the removal of all strange gods, and of Israel's return to Jehovah, is the necessary, intimately connected, introduction to the narrative of the deeds of Jephthah. It is indispensable to the understanding of his victory and suffering. It explains, moreover, why in the narrative concerning him, only the name Jehovah appears. It teaches us to consider the nature and measure of that life in which God, once lost but found again, reigns and rules.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

**Apostasy and Repentance.** Neither Deborah's jubilant song of triumph, nor Gideon's exulting trumpet notes, could secure succeeding generations of Israel against renewed apostasy. It reappeared even after a season of quiet piety. But equally sure was the coming of divine judgments. They came from all sides, in ever-growing severity and magnitude. The gods of the heathen brought no help, — for they were nothing; and yet for their sake had Israel betrayed its living God. Then Israel began seriously to reflect. They not merely wept, they did works of true repentance. And whenever, by prayer and actions, they call upon their merciful God, He, like a tender father, cannot withstand them. He hears and answers.

Not so do men act toward each other; and yet they are called on to walk in the footsteps of Christ. What wonder that men find their kindness ill requited, when God experiences a similar treatment! But how then dare they cherish anger, when besought for reconciliation! If God was moved

how can we remain untouched? And yet grudge-bearing is a characteristic against which even pious Christians bear no grudge. The sinless God forgives, and gives ever anew, — and witnesses of God, men of theological pursuits, cherish ill-will and rancor for years!

"How well, my friend, in God thou livest,  
Appears from how thy debtor thou forgivest."

STARKE: Men are very changeable and inconstant, and prone to decline from the right way; neither sufficiently moved by kindness, nor influenced by punishment. — THE SAME: True repentance consists not in words but in deeds. —

LISCO: Israel confesses its guilt and ill-desert and gives itself wholly up to God's will and righteous chastening; yet, full of faith, asks for merciful, albeit unmerited, deliverance. — GERLACH: That the Lord first declares that He will no longer help Israel, afterwards, however, takes compassion on them and makes their cause his own, is a representation which repeats itself frequently in the Old Testament. Each of its opposite elements is true and consistent with the other, as soon as we call to mind that God, notwithstanding his eternity and unchangeableness, lives with and loves his people in time, and under human forms and conditions.

*Repentance followed by energy, concord, and mutual confidence.*

CHAPTER X. 17, 18.

17 Then [And] the children [sons] of Ammon were gathered together, and encamped in Gilead. And the children [sons] of Israel assembled themselves together, and encamped in Mizpeh [Mizpah]. And the people and princes [the people (namely) the chiefs] of Gilead said one to another, What man *is he* [Who is the man] that will [doth] begin to fight against the children [sons] of Ammon? he shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.

EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

The call of Gideon to be a deliverer took place just when the national distress was at its greatest height, and Midian had entered on a new expedition of pillage and plunder. A like coincidence marked the present crisis. The sons of Ammon were just making a new incursion into Gilead, when they met with a new spirit. The signature of apostasy and sin, is discord and weakness, despondency and self-seeking, issuing in failure and disaster, whenever action be undertaken. The sign of conversion and true penitence is concord and confidence, leading, by God's assistance, to victory.

Ver. 17. And the sons of Ammon were gathered together . . . the sons of Israel also assembled themselves. The phrase "sons of Israel" does not always include all the tribes. The men of any single tribe may be so designated. The narrator uses the expression here, however, in order to intimate that though Gilead alone actually engages in the war it is nevertheless done as Israel, according to the mind and spirit of the whole nation. As soon as Israel repents, the collective national spirit, the consciousness of national unity through the calling of God, reawakes in each of the tribes. The localities at which the respective armies are said to have assembled and prepared for the conflict, will be considered under ch. xi. 29.

Ver. 18. And the body of the nobles of Gil-

ead said. The hitherto cowed Israelites assembled themselves; but that was not all: they were moreover united in all they did. The narrative says expressly *וְהָעָם שָׂרֵי גִלְעָד*, "the people of the nobles of Gilead," i. e. all, without exception.<sup>1</sup> No envious, self-seeking voice of protest or dissent was heard. In times in which distress is recognized with real repentance, private interests cease to govern. People then begin to honor truth and actual merit. No deference is then paid to personal vanity, family connections, or wealth; but, all by-views and self-seeking being set aside, he is sought after who renders service. The nobles of Gilead could not more clearly indicate their new temper, than by unitedly promising to subordinate themselves to him who begins to render the banners of Israel once more victorious, as their head.

It is to be noted that they say, "whoso *beginneth* to fight against the sons of Ammon." In him who first again gains an advantage over the enemy in battle, it will be manifest that God is with him. He, accordingly, is to be, not what Gideon's legions desired him to become, their *מוֹשֵׁל*, ruler, nor what the sinful people of Shechem made of Abimelech, their *מֶלֶךְ*, king, but their *רֹאשׁ*, leader. Him, who conquers with God, they desire to follow unanimously, as a common head.

And this one soon appeared.

<sup>1</sup> [Dr. Cassel evidently takes *וְהָעָם שָׂרֵי* as *stat. const.* scarcely correct. First, because of the article (cf. Ges. *Gram.* 110, 2); and, secondly, because *עַם* never stands

for the mere notion of totality. It is better to take *שָׂרֵי גִלְעָד* as standing in apposition to *וְהָעָם*; "the people (namely) the chiefs of Gilead," i. e. the people through their chiefs, as represented by them. — Ta.]

*The previous history and exile of Jephthah. His recall by the elders of Gilead.*

CHAPTER XI. 1-11.

1 Now [And] Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour [a valiant hero],  
 2 and he *was* the son of an harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah. And Gilead's wife  
 bare him sons; and his [the] wife's sons grew up, and they thrust [drove] out  
 Jephthah, and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for  
 3 thou *art* the son of a strange [another] woman. Then [And] Jephthah fled from  
 his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob: and there were gathered [there gathered  
 themselves] vain men [i.e. empty men, i. e. adventurers] <sup>1</sup> to Jephthah, and went out  
 4 with him. And it came to pass in process of [after a considerable] time, that the  
 5 children [sons] of Ammon made war against [with] Israel. And it was so, that  
 when the children [sons] of Ammon made war against [with] Israel, the elders of  
 6 Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob: And they said unto Jephthah  
 Come, and be our captain, that we may [and let us] fight with the children [sons]  
 7 of Ammon. And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did not ye hate me,  
 and expel me out of my father's house? and why are ye come unto me now when  
 8 ye are in distress? And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Therefore we  
 turn again to thee now, that thou mayest go with us, and fight against the children  
 9 [sons] of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead. And Jephthah  
 said unto the elders of Gilead, If ye bring me home [back] again to fight  
 against the children [sons] of Ammon, and the Lord [Jehovah] deliver them  
 10 before me, shall I [then I will] be your head? [.] And the elders of Gilead said  
 unto Jephthah, The Lord [Jehovah] be witness [i.e. hearer] between us, if we  
 11 do not so according to thy words [word]. Then Jephthah went with the elders  
 of Gilead, and the people <sup>2</sup> made [placed] him [for a] head and captain over them:  
 and Jephthah uttered all his words before the Lord [Jehovah] in Mizpeh [Mizpah].

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 3 — וְיִפְתָּח. Dr. Cassel here (cf. ch. ix. 4) renders, *lose Leute*, loose, unsettled persons. In his article on "Jephthah" in *Herzog's Real-Encyclopädie*, vi. 466, he describes them as — "people who had nothing to lose. The character and condition of such persons is more definitely described in 1 Sam. xxii. 2, where distressed persons, embarrassed debtors, and men of wild dispositions, are said to have attached themselves to the fugitive David." To prevent erroneous inferences, it is necessary to add the next sentence: "But that Jephthah, like David, engaged in marauding expeditions, cannot be proved." — Tr.]

[2 Ver. 11. — וְיָבִיאוּ. Dr. Cassel: *Gesamtheit* — "the collective body," — evidently with reference to his previous rendering in ch. x. 18. Cf. note 1, p. 161. — Tr.]

EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

The story of Jephthah is one of the most remarkable episodes of the Sacred Scriptures. But at the same time it is one of those episodes which, from being too exclusively considered in the character of disconnected fragments, have been subjected both anciently and in modern times, to the most singular misapprehensions and distortions. It gives the moral likeness of an Israelitish tribe, in the time of its awakening and return to God. Manasseh is again the coöperating tribe, — not the western half, however, but the eastern, its equal in warlike spirit (1 Chr. v. 24) and strength, but holding a relation to the hero who appears among them different from that formerly held by the other toward Gideon. When Gideon entered on his work, everything depended on his own personality. No divine awakening had preceded, not even in his own city. In his own house, there was an altar to be destroyed. The number of those who deserved to be his followers was only three hundred. Even in

the time of his success and greatness, it is he alone who keeps and upholds the divine life in the nation.

The history of Jephthah furnishes a different picture. Gilead too had sinned, but it had repented. The whole people had put away its false gods, before it found its hero. This hero, on his part, finds himself supported by a spiritually awakened tribe, thoroughly animated with the spirit of faith and obedience toward Jehovah. Every part of the picture is projected on a background of true piety. Jephthah is the hero, the leader, the head of the tribe: but he is not the only one whose eyes are fixed on God; the whole tribe, like members of the head, obey the same attraction. It is only because this background was ignored, i. e. because the connection between chapters x. and xi. was overlooked, that the principal incident in the history of Jephthah has from the earliest times given rise to such singular explanations.

Vers. 1, 2. And Jephthah the Gileadite was a valiant hero. The same terms were applied to

**Gideon by the Messenger of God** (ch. vi. 12). The nobles of Gilead had determined (ch. x. 18) to elect as their leader, him who should give evidence that God is with him, by beginning to wage successful warfare. Thereupon the narrative proceeds: "And Jephthah was a valiant hero." It was concerning whom they learned that he answered their description. His history is then related. A noble of Gilead had begotten him by a public harlot, and taken him into his house. The name of the father is unknown. In the statement: "Gilead begat Jephthah;" and also when we read of the "wife of Gilead;" the term "Gilead," as trite name, takes the place of the unknown personal name. Not, indeed, as if "Gilead" could not be a personal name; but if it were, Jephthah would have been designated as "son of Gilead," and not as a "Gileadite," without any paternal surname, as he is styled at the first mention, when he enters on the scene, and at the last, when he dies (ch. xii. 7). This conclusion is strengthened by a comparison with the names of other heroes; with that of his predecessor Gideon, for instance, who is constantly styled the "son of Joash;" and also, among others, with that of one of his successors, "Elon the Zebulonite (ch. xii. 11), as to whom there can be no doubt that he was of the tribe of Zebulun, and had no more definite patronymic. — The father, subsequently, had other sons by his lawful wife. These, when they had grown up, and their father had died, expelled Gideon from the house, although the eldest; for, said they, —

Thou art the son of another woman (אִשָּׁה אֲחֵרָה). "Other" is here to be taken in a bad sense, as in the expression "other (*acherim*) gods." As those are spurious gods, so "another *ishah*" is a spurious wife. The expulsion of Jephthah was a base act; for his father had reared him in his house, and left him there, and he was the oldest child. The act cannot be compared with the removal of Ishmael and the sons of Keturah from the house of Abraham. Those the father himself dismissed with presents. But Jephthah's father had kept him in the house, and had thus signified his purpose to treat him as a son. Nevertheless, Jephthah could obtain no redress from the "elders of Gilead" (ver. 7). If he had been the son of one who was properly a wife, his brothers would doubtless have been obliged to admit him to a share in the inheritance; for Rachel, the ancestress of Gilead, had also several co-wives, whose sons — of whom, he it observed in passing, Gad in Gilead was one — inherited as well as Joseph himself. But they maintained that his mother had not been a wife of their father at all, not even one of secondary rank, — that she was nothing but an harlot. On the ground of bastardy, they could drive him out of the house; and at that time, no voice raised itself in Gilead but that of mockery and hatred toward Jephthah. Such being the case he fled.

**Ver. 3. And dwelt in the land of Tob.** The name Tob is found again in 2 Sam. x. 6, in connection with a war of the Ammonites against king David. Its subsequent mention in the Books of the Maccabees (I. ch. v. 13; II. xii. 17), as *Τῶβ*, *Τούβ*, affords no material assistance to any attempt at identification. But since Jephthah flees thither as to an asylum; and since adventurers collect about him there, as in a region of safety, whence he is able to make successful expeditions, we may

be justified perhaps to hazard a conjecture which would tend to increase our knowledge of the Hauran. *Erets tob* (אֶרֶץ טוֹב) means good land, and fertile, as Canaan is said to be (Ex. iii. 8). The best land in Hauran, still named from its fertility, and with which Wetzstein has made us again acquainted, is the Rubbeb, in eastern Hauran. Its name signifies, "fertile cornfield." It is the best land in Syria. It is still the seat of Bedouin tribes, who extend their pillaging expeditions far and wide. Of the present tribes, Wetzstein relates that they frequently combine with the Zubêd, whose name reminds us of the Zabadeans (1 Macc. xii. 31). Their land is an excellent place of refuge, difficult of attack, and easily defended.

At the head of adventurous persons whom the report which soon went out concerning his valor, had collected about him, he made warlike expeditions like those of David (1 Sam. xxii. 2), directed, as David's were also, against the enemies of his nation. Of the son of Jesse, it is true, we know for certain that, notwithstanding his banishment, he attacked and defeated the Philistines (cf. 1 Sam. xxiii. 1 ff.); but though we have no such direct statements concerning Jephthah, we yet have good grounds for concluding that his expeditions were directed against the Ammonites. For he evinced himself to be a mighty hero; and the Gileaditish nobles had pledged themselves to elect him as their head who should initiate victories over Ammon. Therefore, when their choice falls on Jephthah, it must be because they have heard of his deeds in the land of Tob against this enemy. — Modern writers, especially, have made a real Abälino of Jephthah, steeped in blood and pillage. The character belongs to him as little as to David. Though banished, he was a valiant guerilla chieftain of his people against their enemies. He was the complete opposite of an Abimelech. The latter sought adventurers (רִיזִים) for a wicked deed; to Jephthah, as to David, they come of their own accord and subordinate themselves to him. Abimelech was without cause an enemy of his father's house, and dipped his sword in the blood of his own brothers. Jephthah, banished and persecuted by his brothers, turned his strength against the enemies of Israel; and when recalled, cherished neither revenge nor grudge in his heart. Abimelech had fallen away from God; Jephthah was his faithful servant. All this appears from his words and conduct.

**Vers. 4-6. And after a considerable time it came to pass that the sons of Ammon made war with Israel.** It was during the time of sin and impenitence, that Jephthah was driven away by violence and hatred. He returned as an elderly man, with a grown-up daughter. The Ammonitish conflict and oppression lasted eighteen years. The flight of Jephthah to Tob occurred probably some time previous to the beginning of these troubles. In the course of these years he had acquired fame, rest, house, and possessions. He had found God, and God was with him. If this were not his character, he would not have met the "elders of Gilead" as he did. Meanwhile, however, another spirit had asserted itself in Gilead also. For it is the sign of new life, that the elders of Gilead do not shun the humiliation of going to Jephthah. To be sure, they must have been informed that he also served no strange gods; for how otherwise could he be of service to them? In any case, however, it was no small matter to go to

the hero whom, not his brothers only, but they also, the judges, had once ignominiously driven forth, and now say to him: Come with us, and be our captain! (יְהוֹנָדָה: a leader in war, and according to later usage in peace also.)

Vers. 7-9. And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did ye not hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? The interview between him and the elders affords a striking proof of the subduing influence which the confession of God exercises, even over persons of vigorous and warlike spirits. Jephthah's speech does not conceal the reproach, that after the hard treatment he received, they should have invited him back before this, not first now when they are in distress. He speaks in a strain similar to that in which the voice of God itself had recently addressed Israel (ch. x. 11).

And nobly do "the elders" answer him. For that very reason, say they, because we are in distress, do we come to thee. Such being the fact, thou wilt surely come. Did matters stand differently, thou wouldest probably (and not unjustly) refuse; but as it is, we call thee to go with us to fight, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead. The satisfaction thus made to Jephthah is indeed great; but the danger and responsibility to which he is invited are not less eminent. His answer, nevertheless, exhibits no longer any trace of sensitiveness or pride. If his tribe call him to fight, he will obey their summons — as all heroes have ever done, who loved their native land. He, however, does it under a yet nobler impulse. Under other circumstances — such is the underlying thought — I would not have come to be your head. If you were now as heretofore, who would wish to come! for far as it is from being a blessing to the trees when the thorn-bush reigns, so far is it from pleasing to a noble mind to rule over thorn-bushes. But since you come to get me to fight with you against Ammon — full of a new spirit, so that I can cherish the hope that God will deliver the enemy before me — I consent to be your head. It is not to be overlooked that Jephthah speaks of "Jehovah," not of "Elohim," and that he places the issue in God's hand; for, as ch. x. teaches, Gilead had learned to see that only God can help. Jephthah is called because God's Spirit is recognized in him. Verse 9 has often been taken as a question; a construction which Keil has already, and very properly, rejected.<sup>1</sup> The position of affairs has altogether erroneously been so apprehended, as if Jephthah were fearful lest, after victory achieved, they would then no longer recognize him as head, and wished to assure himself on this point beforehand. This view originates in the failure to perceive the spiritual background on which the action is projected. Jephthah is not a man who will be their head at any cost. There is no trace of ambition in his language. He is willing to be their head, if they are such members as will insure the blessing of God. Whoever knows his countrymen as he knew them, and has himself turned to God, will not be willing to be their leader, unless they have become other than they were. For that reason he says: If you bring me back, in order truly and unitedly to fight Ammon, and be worthy of God's blessing, — in that case, I will be your head. The guaranty of vic-

tory is sought by this valiant man, not in his own courage, but in the worthiness of the warriors before God.

Ver. 10. Jehovah be a hearer between us, if we do not so according to thy word. They invoke God, whom they have penitently supplicated, as witness; they swear by Him that they will do whatever Jephthah will command. They give him thereby a guaranty, not only that as soldiers they will obey their general, but also that in their conduct towards God they will be guided by their leader's instruction and direction. For not in military discipline only, but much rather in the moral and religious spirit by which Israel is animated, lies his hope of victory.

Ver. 11. And Jephthah spake all his words before Jehovah in Mizpah. Jephthah goes along, the people — the collective nobility — make him head and leader; but not by means of sin and dishonor, as Abimelech became king. Jephthah receives his appointment from the hand of God. In the spirit of God, he enters on his work. As chief, it devolves on him to tell his people what course must be pursued: he does it in the presence of God. It is the ancient God of Israel before whom, at Mizpah, where the people are encamped, he issues his regulations, addresses, and military orders. On Mizpah, see at ch. xi. 29.

Keil has justly repelled the idea that the expression לִפְנֵי יְהוָה, "before Jehovah," necessarily implies a solemn sacrificial ceremony. But, on the other hand, the impossibility of such a solemnity cannot be maintained. Whatever the ceremonial may have been, the meaning is, that Jephthah, in speaking all his words before God, thereby confessed Jehovah and his law, in contradistinction to heathenism and idolatry. In the spirit of this confession, he entered on his office.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

The manner in which divine compassion fills men with his Spirit, for the salvation of Israel, is wonderful. The inquiry into the origin of the heroes who suddenly arise in Israel, and in nations generally, to deliver and save, is one which leads down into the profoundest depths of divine wisdom. The selection of every Israelitish Judge is a new sign of compassion, but also of corrective chastening. For presumption and self-sufficiency were always at the bottom of their apostasies. Hence, in the selection of the Judges, the admonition to humility becomes continually more urgent. Israel is made to know that God chooses whom He wills, and raises from the dust him whom the people will place at their head. They have already experienced this in the cases of Ehud, the left-handed, of Deborah, a woman, of Gideon, the youngest and least of his family. All these, however, had been well-born persons, connected with the people by normal relations. In Jephthah's case, the choice becomes still more extraordinary. A hasterd, an exile and adventurer, must be gone after. The magnates of the land must humble themselves to bring the exile home, to submit themselves to him, and make him the head of the tribe. That they do it, is proof of their repentance; that the choice is just, is shown by the result.

<sup>1</sup> [Keil observes that the reply of the elders in ver. 10, הֲיָבִיאוּנוּ הַיּוֹמָהּ הַזֶּה בְּנֵי גִלְעָד, "presupposes an affirmative, not an interrogative utterance on the part of Jephthah." The

אֲנִי (ver. 9) is simply the emphatic correlative of the preceding אִתָּם. — Tr.]

Thus, many a stone, rejected by the builders, has, typically, even before Christ, become the head of the corner. Unbelief deprives a nation of judgment. To discern spirits, is a work to be done only by an inward life in God. Sin expels whomsoever it cannot overcome; but penitence recalls him, whenever it perceives the ground of its own distress. Only he, however, returns without a grudge in his heart, who shares in the penitence.

STARKE: Men are accustomed to go the nearest way; but God commonly takes a roundabout way, when He designs to make one noble and great.<sup>1</sup> — THE SAME: Happy he, who in all he speaks and does looks with holy reverence, even though it be not expressed in words, to the omniscient and omnipresent God; for this is the true foundation of all faithfulness and integrity.

[BP. HALL: The common gifts of God respect not the parentage or blood, but are indifferently scattered where He pleases to let them fall. The

choice of the Almighty is not guided by our rules: as in spiritual, so in earthly things, it is not in him that willeth. — SCOTT: As the sins of parents so often occasion disgrace and hardship to their children, this should unite with higher motives, to induce men to govern their passions according to the law of God. — BUSH: The pretense of legal right, is often a mere cover to the foulest wrongs and injuries. — HENRY: The children of Israel were assembled and encamped, ch. x. 17; but, like a body without a head, they owned they could not fight without a commander. So necessary it is to all societies that there be some to rule, and others to obey, rather than that every man be his own master. Blessed be God for government, for a good government! — BP. HALL (on ver. 7): Can we look for any other answer from God than this? Did ye not drive me out of your houses, out of your hearts, in the time of your health and jollity? Did ye not plead the strictness of my charge, and the weight of my yoke? Did not your willful sins expel me from your souls? What do you now, crouching and creeping to me in the evil day? — TR.]

1 [BP. HALL: "Men love to go the nearest way, and often fail. God commonly goes about, and in his own time comes surely home." — TR.]

### *Jephthah's diplomatic negotiations with the king of Ammon.*

#### CHAPTER XI. 12-28.

- 12 And Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the children [sons] of Ammon, saying, What hast thou to do with me [What is there between me and thee], that  
13 thou art come against [unto] me to fight in my land? And the king of the children [sons] of Ammon answered unto the messengers of Jephthah, Because<sup>1</sup> Israel took away my land, when they [he] came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even unto [the] Jabbok, and unto [the] Jordan: now therefore restore those *lands* again  
14 peaceably. And Jephthah sent messengers again unto the king of the children  
15 [sons] of Ammon: And said unto him, Thus saith Jephthah, Israel took not away  
16 the land of Moab, nor the land of the children [sons] of Ammon: But [For] when Israel [they] came up from Egypt, and [then Israel] walked through the wilderness  
17 unto the Red Sea, and came to Kadesh: [.] Then [And] Israel<sup>a</sup> sent messen-  
gers unto the king of Edom, saying, Let me, I pray thee, pass through thy  
land:<sup>b</sup> but the king of Edom would not hearken [hearkened not] *thereto*. And in  
like manner they sent unto the king of Moab; but he would not *consent*. And Is-  
rael abode in Kadesh. Then they went along through the wilderness, and com-  
passed<sup>c</sup> the land of Edom, and the land of Moab, and came by [on] the east side<sup>d</sup>  
of [to] the land of Moab, and pitched [encamped] on the other [yonder] side of Ar-  
non, but came not within the border of Moab: for Arnon was [is] the border of  
19 Moab.<sup>e</sup> And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites,<sup>f</sup> the  
king of Heshbon; and Israel said unto him, Let us pass, we pray thee, through  
20 thy land<sup>g</sup> unto my place. But Sihon trusted not Israel to pass through his  
coast [territory]: but Sihon gathered all his people together,<sup>h</sup> and [they]  
21 pitched [encamped] in Jahaz, and [he] fought against [with] Israel.<sup>i</sup> And  
the Lord [Jehovah, the] God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the  
hand of Israel, and they smote them;<sup>k</sup> so [and] Israel possessed [took possession

<sup>a</sup> Ver. 17. — The words printed in blackfaced type are found in Num. xx. and xxi. The first part of ver. 17 is from Num. xx. 14, except that there "Moses" takes the place of "Israel." On the other hand, the expression, "Thus saith thy brother Israel," there used, is here wanting.

<sup>b</sup> Ver. 17. — Num. xx. 17; only, "let me pass," is there read, "let us pass."

<sup>c</sup> Ver. 18. — Num. xxi. 4 has לָסַבֵּב.

<sup>d</sup> Ver. 18. — Num. xxi. 11

<sup>e</sup> Ver. 18. — Num. xxi. 13.

<sup>f</sup> Ver. 19. — Num. xxi. 21.

<sup>g</sup> Ver. 19. — Num. xxi. 22 has אֶפְרַיִם for אֶפְרַיִם.

נָח.

<sup>h</sup> Ver. 20. — Num. xxi. 23.

<sup>i</sup> Ver. 20 — Num. xxi. 23, the words "they encamped" being substituted for "he came."

<sup>k</sup> Ver. 21 — Num. xxi. 24; "Israel smote him."

- 22 of, i. e. conquered] all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country. And they possessed [conquered] all the coasts [the entire territory] of the Amorites, from Arnon even unto [the] Jabbok, and from the wilderness even unto [the] Jordan.
- 23 So now the Lord [Jehovah, the] God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel, and shouldst thou possess [dispossess]<sup>2</sup> it [i. e. the people Israel]? Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever [whatsoever] the Lord [Jehovah] our God shall drive out from before us [shall give us to possess], them [that] will we possess. And now art thou any thing better than Balak the son of Zippor king of Moab? did he ever strive against [litigate with]<sup>3</sup> Israel, or did he ever fight against them, [?] While [Since] Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns [daughter-cities], and in Aroer [Aror] and her towns [daughter-cities], and in all the cities that *be* along by the coasts [banks] of Arnon [there have passed] three hundred years? [?] why therefore did ye not recover them within that time? Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me: the Lord [Jehovah] the Judge be judge this day between the children [sons] of Israel and the children [sons] of Ammon. Howbeit, the king of the children [sons] of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he sent him.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL

[1 Ver. 13. — Dr. Cassel omits "Because." בְּי, in this place, may be either the sign of a direct quotation, as which it would be sufficiently indicated by a colon after "Jephthah"; or a causal conjunction (E. V., De Wette). If the latter, the sentence is elliptical: "We have much to do with each other," or, "I am come to fight against thee," *because*, etc. — Tr.]

[2 Ver. 23. — תִּירָשְׁנוּ, lit. "seize him." "The construction of יָרַשׁ with the accusative of the *people*," says Keil, "arises from the fact that in order to seize upon a land, it is necessary first to overpower the people that inhabit it." Both he and Bertheau, however, refer the suffix to "the Amorite," and are then obliged to make the Amorite stand for the "land of the Amorite." — Tr.]

[3 Ver. 25. — רִיב, to contend in words, to plead before a judge. Dr. Cassel translates by *rechten*, to litigate, which must here of course be taken in a derivative sense. — Tr.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL

Ver. 12. The peaceable negotiations into which Jephthah, before he proceeds to war, enters with Ammon, demon-strate — and the less successful such efforts usually are, the more characteristically — the truly God-fearing character of the new chieftain. The Ammonites were a strong and valiant people (cf. Num. xxi.; Deut. ii. 20, 21); but it was not on this account that he sought to negotiate with them once more. The Ammonites were descended from Lot, the nephew of Abraham; and Israel, on their journey to Canaan, had not been allowed to assail them (Deut. ii. 19). Jephthah, before he draws the sword, wishes to free himself from every liability to be truthfully charged with the violation of ancient and sacred prescriptions. He desires to have a clear, divine right to war, in case Ammon will not desist from its hostile purposes. He hopes for victory, not through strength of arms, but through the righteousness of his cause. This he would secure; so that he may leave it to God to decide between the parties.

מָה־לִּי, **What is there between me and thee,** לֵבָי. A proverbial form of speech, which may serve the most divergent states of mind to express and introduce any effort to repel and ward off. While it might here be rendered, "What wilt thou? what have I done to thee?" in the mouth of the prophet Elisha, repelling the unholy king (2 Kgs. iii. 13), it means, "How comest thou to me? I know thee not!" and in that of the woman whose sorrow for the loss of her child breaks out

afresh when she sees Elijah (1 Kgs. xvii. 18), "Alas, let me alone, stay away!" The Gospel translates it by *τί ἐγὼ καὶ σοί*: in which form it appears in the celebrated passage, John ii. 4, where Jesus speaks to Mary. But it has there not the harsh sense, "What have I to do with thee!" (which it has not even here in the message of Jephthah), but only expresses a hurried request for silence, for his "hour was not yet come."

Ver. 13. Israel took away my land. For a question of right, Ammon, like other robbers and conquerors, was not at all prepared; but since it is put, the hostile king cannot well evade it. Reasons, however, have never been wanting to justify measures of violence. Although unacquainted with the arts of modern state-craft, ancient nations, as well as those of later times, understood how to base the demands of their desires on historical wrongs. Only, such claims, when preferred by nations like the Ammonites, usually did not wear even the appearance of truth. The king of Ammon seeks to excuse his present war against Israel, by asserting that when Israel came up out of Egypt they took from him the territory between Arnon, Jabbok, and Jordan, about coextensive with the inheritance of Reuben and Gad. It was utterly untrue. For when Israel went forth out of Egypt, this territory was in the hands of Sihon, king of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon (Num. xxi.). This king, it is true, had obtained it by conquest; but not so much from Ammon as from Moab, even though some connection of the Ammonites with the conquered lands is to be inferred from Josh. xiii. 25. Israel itself had fought with



neither Moab nor Ammon, taken nothing from them, nor even crossed their borders.

Jephthah does not fail to reduce this false pretense to its nothingness; for it was of the utmost importance in his view to make it manifest that the war, on the side of the Ammonites, was thoroughly unjust. The memoir which he sends to the king of Ammon, is as clear as it is instructive. It shows the existence of a historical consciousness in the Israel of that day, asserting itself as soon as the people became converted to God. For only a believing people is instructed and strengthened by history. Jephthah unfolds a piece of the history of Israel in the desert. It has been asked, in what relation the statements here made stand to those contained in the Pentateuch. The answer is, that the message of Jephthah makes a free use of the statements of the Pentateuch.

Vers. 15-28. Thus saith Jephthah. This introduction to ver. 15 already indicates the free combination by Jephthah, of statements derived from the ancient records. That which is of peculiar interest in this document, and strongly evinces its originality, is, that while the turns of the language and the various verbal repetitions (already pointed out in the text) indicate the source whence it was borrowed, its departures from that source evidence the freedom with which the material is used for the end in view. Nothing is said which is not contained in the Pentateuch; only a few facts, of present pertinence, are brought forward and freely emphasized. Bertheau is inaccurate, when he thinks that the statement in ver. 17, concerning Israel's sending to Moab to ask for passage through their land and Moab's refusal, is altogether new. For in the first place the perfect equality of Edom and Moab as regards the policy pursued towards them by Moses, is already intimated in Deut. ii. 9; and in the next place, ver. 29 of the same chapter makes Moses request Sihon to give a passage to Israel through his land, and that he will not do "as the sons of Esau and the Moabites did," to wit, deny them. That which connects ver. 29 with ver. 28 (Deut. ii.), is not that Esau and Moab had granted what Moses now requests of Sihon, but that they had not allowed his petition, by reason of which he is compelled to demand it of Sihon.<sup>1</sup> Here, therefore, it is plainly intimated, that Moab also refused a passage. This fact, Jephthah clothes in his own language, and weaves into his exact narrative with the selfsame design with which Moses alluded to it in the passage already quoted, namely, to prove that Israel was compelled by necessity to take its way through

the land of the Amorite. The same tracing of events to their causes, leads Jephthah in ver. 20 to say of Sihon: "he trusted not Israel," whereas Num. xxi. 23 merely says: "he permitted not." Jephthah seeks to give additional emphasis to the fact, that if Sihon lost his land, the fault lay not with Israel. Sihon could not but see that no other passage remained for Israel; but he refused to credit the peaceable words of Moses. His distrust was his ruin. Further: instead of the expression, "until I pass over Jordan, into the land which Jehovah our God giveth us" (Deut. ii. 29) Jephthah writes, "let us pass through thy land to my place." At that time, he means to say, the Canaan this side the Jordan was Israel's destination; for not till after that—and this is why he changes the phraseology—did God give us Canaan beyond the Jordan also. For the same reason he substitutes "Israel" for "Moses" in the expression, "And Moses sent messengers" (Num. xx. 14). Over against Ammon, he brings Israel into view as a national personality.

On the basis of this historical review, Jephthah in a few sentences places the unrighteousness of his demands before the king of Ammon. What, therefore, Jehovah our God allowed us to conquer—that thou wilt possess? thou, who hadst no claims to it at any time, since, properly speaking, it was never thine? If any party could maintain a claim, it was Moab; but Balak, the king of Moab, never raised it, nor did he make war on that account. The conquest, by virtue of which Israel held the land, was not the result of wrongful violence, but of a war rashly induced by the enemy himself. God gave the victory and the land. A more solid title than that which secures to Israel the country between the Arnon and the Jabbok, there cannot be. Or has Ammon a better for his own possession? Were they not taken by force of arms from the Zamzummim (Deut. ii. 21)? or, as Jephthah expresses it, "were they not given thee by Chemosh, thy god?" He makes use of Ammon's own form of thought and expression. Chemosh (the desolater, from  $\text{כִּמְשׁוֹ} = \text{כָּרַשׁ}$ ) is the God of War. As such, he can here represent the god of Ammon, although usually regarded as the Moabitish deity; for it is the martial method in which Ammon obtained his land on which the stress is laid. Chemosh is war personified, hence especially honored by the Moabites, whose Ar Moab, the later Areopolis, is evidently related to the Greek Ares<sup>2</sup> (Mars). Hence also the representation of him on extant specimens of ancient Are-

<sup>1</sup> [This interpretation of Deut. ii. 29, which would clear it of all appearance of conflict with Num. xx. 14-20, is unfortunately not supported by the language of the original. The natural rendering of the text is substantially that of the E. V.: "Thou shalt sell me food for money, that I may eat; and thou shalt give me water for money, that I may drink; only I will pass through on my feet: as did unto me the sons of Esau who dwell in Seir, and the Moabites who dwell in Ar: until I pass over Jordan, into the land which Jehovah our God giveth us." The reader's first thought is, that the conduct of Edom and Moab is referred to as a precedent covering both parts of the present request to Sihon: "Sell me food and grant me a passage—as Edom and Moab did, so do thou." But history relates that Edom denied a passage, and that Israel made a detour around the Edomite territories. May we then regard the precedent as referring only to the matter of supplies? and the clause which recalls it to the memory of Sihon, as occupying a place after that which a logical arrangement of the clauses would assign it? This supposition, by no means unlikely in itself, seems to be favored by the construction

of the sentence. It does not, however, relieve the passage of all difficulty. For it still leaves the implication that Edom and Moab sold food and water to Israel, whereas according to Num. xx. 20 they refused to do that also. Keil therefore argues that this refusal was made when Israel was on the western boundary of Edom, where the character of the mountains made it easy to repulse an army; but that when Israel had reached their eastern boundary, where the mountains sunk down into vast elevated plains, and present no difficulty to an invading army, the Edomites took counsel of prudence, and instead of offering hostilities to the Israelites, contented themselves with the profitable sale of what would otherwise have been taken by force. This is at least a plausible explanation, although not founded on historical evidence, unless, what is by no means improbable, Deut. ii. 2-9 is designed to explain the course of actual events by a statement of divine instructions. — Ta.]

<sup>2</sup> Hence, the name Aroer proves also that the worship of the "War-god" obtained in Ammon as well as in Moab. For a city of that name existed in the territories of each of these nations.

opolitan coins, where he appears with a sword in his right, and a lance and shield in his left hand, with torches on either side (Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.*, iii. 394; Movers, *Phönizier*, i. 334).

Jephthah is sincere in this reference to the title by which Ammon holds his land. He does not dispute a claim grounded on ancient conquest. For in Deut. ii. 21, also, it is remarked, from a purely Israelitish point of view, that "Jehovah gave the land to the sons of Ammon for a possession." Quite rightly too; inasmuch as Jehovah is the God of all nations. But as Jephthah desires to speak intelligibly and forcibly to Ammon, who does not understand the world-wide government of Jehovah, he connects the same sentiment with the name of Chemosh, to whom Ammon traces back his warlike deeds and claims.<sup>1</sup> He thereby points out, in the most striking and conclusive manner, that if Ammon refuses to recognize the rights of Israel to its territory, he at the same time undermines, in principle, his own right to the country he inhabits. Aside from this, 300 years have passed since Israel first dwelt in Heshbon, Aror, and on the banks of the Arnon. The statement exhibits a fine geographical arrangement: Heshbon, as capital of the ancient kingdom, is put first; then, to the north of it, Aror (or Aror, probably so called to distinguish it from the southern Aror) in Gad, over against the capital of Ammon; and finally, in the south, the cities on the Arnon. Possession, so long undisputed, cannot now be called in question. Jephthah concludes, therefore, that on his side no wrong had been committed; but Ammon seeks a quarrel — may God decide between them! But Ammon hearkened not — a proof how little the best and most righteous state papers avail, when men are destitute of good intentions. On the other hand, let this exposition of Jephthah be a model for all litigating nations, and teach them not only to claim, but truly to have, right and justice on their side. For God, the judge, is witness and hearer for all.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

[P. H. S.: Jephthah as Diplomatist — a noble model for modern imitation. His document is, 1. Straightforward and convincing by its truthfulness.]

<sup>1</sup> [WORDSWORTH: 'It does not seem that Jephthah is here using the language of insult to the Ammonites, but is giving them a courteous reply. He appears to recognize Chemosh as a local deity; and he speaks of the Lord as the

ness; 2. Firm in its maintenance of righteous claims; yet, withal, 3. Winning and conciliating in its tone. — The most upright diplomacy may fail to avert war; but it is nevertheless powerful for the right. Israel doubtless fought better, and with higher feelings, when it saw the righteousness of its cause so nobly set forth; while the enemy must have been proportionably depressed by convictions of an opposite character. — Jephthah's diplomacy as contrasted with that of the king of Moab. Alas, that representatives of Christian nations should so often imitate the heathen king rather than the Hebrew Judge, and that Christian nations should uphold them in it!

HENRY: Jephthah did not delight in war, though a mighty man of valor, but was willing to prevent it by a peaceable accommodation. War should be the last remedy, not to be used till all other methods of ending matters in variance have been tried in vain. This rule should also be observed in going to law. The sword of justice, as the sword of war, must not be appealed to till the contending parties have first endeavored by gentler means to understand one another, and to accommodate matters in variance (1 Cor. vi. 1). — THE SAME: (on vers. 17, 18): Those that conduct themselves inoffensively, may take the comfort of it, and plead it against those that charge them with injustice and wrong. Our righteousness will answer for us in time to come, and will "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." — THE SAME: One instance of the honor and respect we owe to God, as our God, is, rightly to possess that which He gives us to possess, receive it from Him, use it for Him, keep it for his sake, and part with it when He calls for it. — THE SAME: (on vers. 27, 28): War is an appeal to heaven, to God the Judge of all, to whom the issues of it belong. If doubtful rights be disputed, He is thereby requested to determine them; if manifest rights be invaded or denied, He is thereby applied to to vindicate what is just, and punish what is wrong. As the sword of justice was made for lawless and disobedient persons (1 Tim. i. 9), so was the sword of war for lawless and disobedient princes and nations. In war, therefore, the eye must be ever up to God; and it must always be thought a dangerous thing to desire or expect that God should patronize unrighteousness. — TR.]

God of Israel, and as our God; and calls Israel *his people*. He regards Him [speaks of Him?] as a national deity, but does not claim universal dominion for Him." — TR.]

*Jephthah proceeds to the conflict. He vows a vow unto Jehovah.*

#### CHAPTER XI. 29–33.

- 29 Then the Spirit of the Lord [Jehovah] came upon Jephthah, and he passed over [through] Gilead, and [namely,] Manasseh, and passed over [through] Mizpeh of Gilead [Mizpeh-Gilead], and from Mizpeh of Gilead [Mizpeh-Gilead] he passed  
30 over unto [against] the children [sons] of Ammon. And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord [Jehovah], and said, If thou shalt without fail<sup>1</sup> deliver the children  
31 [sons] of Ammon into mine hands, Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth [out] of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children [sons] of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's [Jehovah's], and I will offer it

32 up for a burnt-offering. So [And] Jephthah passed over unto the children [sons] of Ammon to fight against them: and the Lord [Jehovah] delivered them into his hands. And he smote them from Aroer even till thou come to Minnith, *even* twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards [unto Abel Keramim], with a very great slaughter. Thus the children [sons] of Ammon were subdued before the children [sons] of Israel.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 30. — It would be better, perhaps, with Dr. Cassel to omit the words "without fail." The Hebrew infinitive before the finite verb serves to intensify the latter; but the endeavor to give its value in a translation, is very apt to result in the suggestion of thoughts or shades of thought foreign to the original. Cf. *Ges. Gram.* 131, 3, a. — *Tr.*]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Vers. 29, 33. Noble words are followed by splendid deeds. It is, however, no easy matter to determine the geographical arena in which the history of Jephthah is enacted. The sons of Israel, according to ch. x. 17, assembled themselves in Mizpah. To Mizpah also, Jephthah is brought from the land of Tob; and there he utters his words before Jehovah (ch. xi. 11). This Mizpah cannot be identical with Mizpeh-Gilead; for, according to ver. 29, Jephthah "proceeded — namely, from Mizpah — through Gilead, even through that part of it which belonged to Manasseh, thence to Mizpeh-Gilead, and from Mizpeh-Gilead against the sons of Ammon." The position of Mizpeh-Gilead may be probably determined. According to Josh. xiii. 26, there was in the territory of Gad a place called Ramath ha-Mizpeh. This place, the same doubtless is elsewhere called Ramoth-Gilead (1 Kgs. iv. 13) and Ramoth in Gilead (Josh. xxi. 38), a possession of the Levites, and distinguished as a city of refuge (Josh. xxi. 8 ff.), is with great probability referred to the site of the present es-Salt, in modern times the only important place south of the Jabbok, the central point of the Belka, and meeting-place of all its roads (Ritter, xv. 1122). Being built around the sides of a steep hill, which is still crowned with a castle, this place answers very well to a city bearing the name Ramoth (Height). It is still a place of refuge; and, as Seetzen relates, those who flee thither, are, according to ancient custom, protected by the inhabitants, even at the risk of their own lives. Now, as Ramoth ha-Mizpeh may be compared with es-Salt, so Mizpeh or ha-Mizpeh Gilead with what in modern times is called el-Belka.<sup>1</sup> If this be allowed, the point of departure of Jephthah's course of victory is plain. From Mizpeh-Gilead he pressed forward against the enemy, and smote him "from Aroer" (ver. 33). Now, according to Josh. xiii. 25, Aroer lay over against Rabbath Ammon (at present Ammán), the capital of the Ammonites, and its position may therefore not improperly be compared with that of the modern Acreh. The places "unto" which Jephthah smote the enemy, Minnith and Abel Keramim, can scarcely be discovered. They only indicate the wealth and cultivation of the now desolate land. Minnith sup-

plied Tyre with wheat (Ezek. xxvii. 17). As to Abel Keramim (Meadow of Vineyards), it implies the vicinity of the Ammonitish capital, whose ruins, and also many of its coins, still exhibit the grape-bunch prominent among their ornaments (Ritter, xv. 1152, 1157). But with all this, Mizpah, whence Jephthah and his men set out to go to es-Salt and Acreh, pursuing their march through Gilead, more definitely, through the Gilead of Manasseh, north of the Jabbok, remains yet undetermined. Although it does not occur again, it must yet have been a place of some importance. Inasmuch as it has a name which characterizes its situation only in a general way, it may in later times have borne a different one. It seems to agree most nearly with what in Josh. xi. 3 is called the "land of Mizpeh," — "the Hivite under Hermon in the land of Mizpeh." For, as is also stated 1 Chr. v. 23, "the half tribe of Manasseh dwelt in the land of Bashan, as far as Baal-Hermon, and Senir, and Mt. Hermon." Now, the Pella of later times, so named on account of the similarity of its situation to the Macedonian city of the same name — it lay on a height, surrounded by water — is said formerly to have been called Butis, still in agreement with the Macedonian city, which lay in the district Bottiæis. A similarity of sound between the name Butis and Mizpah could only then be found, if it might be assumed that as Timnah was also called Timnatah, so Mizpah had also been called Mizpatah. It would at all events be worth while to fix, even conjecturally, upon the place where the great hero prepared himself for his victory. As he enters on the conflict, the Spirit of Jehovah rests upon him. He has given the decision into Jehovah's hands; he looks to Him for victory; and to Him he makes a vow.

Vers. 30-32. This vow has been the subject of the most singular misapprehensions; and yet, rightly understood, it crowns the deep piety of this hero of God. Jephthah perceives the full significance of the course on which he decides. He knows how greatly victory will strengthen faith in God throughout all the tribes. He sees a new Israel rise up. The people have trustingly committed themselves to his leadership, and he has uttered all his "words before Jehovah." In this state of mind, he bows himself before his God (1 Sam. i. 28), and makes a vow.<sup>2</sup> To the nation

<sup>1</sup> [El-Belka is a modern division of the east-jordanic territory, and is bounded by Wady Zerka (the Jabbok) on the north, and by Wady Mojeb (the Arnon) on the south. It is evident, therefore, that our author regards Mizpeh-Gilead as the name of a district, not of a city. The reasoning from "the identification of Ramoth-Mizpeh with es-Salt to that of Mizpeh-Gilead with el-Belka, is not so clear, but seems to be this: Since Ramoth-Mizpeh is also called Ramoth-Gilead, and Ramoth in Gilead, it is to be inferred that Mizpeh, like Gilead, indicates the district in which Ramoth is situated, with this difference, however, that Mizpeh is more definite,

being only a division of Gilead. But Ramoth may be identified with es-Salt in the Belka; hence the ancient district Mizpeh may be compared with the modern province el-Belka. — *Tr.*]

<sup>2</sup> For the history of the exegesis, and its characteristic points, I refer to my article "Jephthah," in Herzog's *Real-Encyclopædie*, the materials of which cannot here be reproduced, but the drift of which is here, I trust, provided with fresh support. The other recent literature on the subject is indicated by Keil, who justly explains that the assumption of a spiritual sacrifice is almost imperatively demanded. The opinions of the church fathers are collected in the Com-

spirit which expresses itself in the Bible, vows are the signs and expression of the deepest self-surrender to God. Jacob makes vows to be fulfilled on his prosperous return home (Gen. xxviii. 20 ff.). In the Psalms, "to pay one's vows," has become synonymous with "to live in God" (Ps. lxi. 8; xvi. 16 ff.). The prophet describes the coming salvation of the nations by saying that they shall "make vows and perform them" (Isa. xix. 21). And this idea is deeply grounded in truth: for in the vows which man makes to God, there is evidently expressed a living faith in the divine omnipotence and omniscience. Man expects from Him, and would fain give to Him. The more one feels himself to have received from God, the more will he desire to consecrate to Him. Such is the feeling under which Jephthah makes his vow to Jehovah. He promises that if God grant him victory, and he return home crowned with success, "then that which goeth forth from the doors of my house to meet me, shall be Jehovah's, and I will present it as a whole burnt-offering." He makes this vow from the fullness of his conviction that victory belongs to God alone, and from the fullness of his love, which would give to God that which belongs to Him as the author of success. He would make it known to God, that he regards Him, and not himself, as the commander-in-chief. There exists, therefore, a profound connection between the words, "when I return in peace from the sons of Ammon," and the expression, "whatsoever cometh forth to meet me;" and it is essential to the right understanding of the vow that this be borne in mind. Victory will awaken great rejoicings among the people. They will meet the returning victor with loud acclamations of gladness. They will receive him with gifts and adornments, with garlands and dances. Such receptions were customary among all nations. The multitude scattered roses, myrtles, and perfumes. Similar customs obtained in Israel (1 Sam. xviii. 6). Jephthah will be celebrated and praised. But not to him—to God, belongs the honor! That which is consecrated to him, belongs, wholly and entirely, to God. *This is the first ground of his vow.* Jephthah's overflowing heart knows not what to consecrate. He feels that nothing is sufficient to be presented to God. But all things are subject to God's disposal. Therefore, whatever comes forth over the threshold of his house to meet him, when he returns victorious,—it shall be for God. He will have no part in it. By this first ground of the vow, its analogy with heathen narratives is so far limited, that there is here no talk of a sacrifice to consist of just the *first*<sup>2</sup> whom he meets, and the first *alone*. Nor is it necessary to assume that הַיּוֹלֵךְ הַפְּרִי, "that which goeth forth," must be understood to mean only *one* person. It is as little necessary as that in Num. xxx. 3 (2), where vows are treated of, the words

הַיּוֹלֵךְ הַפְּרִי, "that which proceedeth out of his mouth," must mean *one* word. The participle is in the singular on account of its neutral signification. This indefiniteness is the peculiar characteristic of the votive formula. Equally indefinite is the meaning of the verb הֵצִי ("goeth forth"), which may be used of persons and things, men and animals (cf. Gen. ix. 10). But the occasion of the vow shows also that Jephthah must have thought of *persons* as coming forth to meet him. At all events, he cannot have thought that precisely a lamb or an ox would come forth from his doors to meet him. Notwithstanding the breadth of the vow, notwithstanding all its indefiniteness, which is left, as it were, to be filled out by God himself, the chieftain must have thought of *persons* coming to meet him; for they come forth on account of the victory, and for that reason may be given to God who gives the triumph. Doubtless, the abundance of his love is as boundless as that of his faith. As little as he analyzes the latter, by which God's victorious might enters his heart, so little does his vow separate and individualize the objects of the former. He calculates not—raises no difficulties: whatever comes to meet him, that he will give to God. But as surely as this does not include things beyond the range of possible contingencies, so surely must he have had some thoughts as to who might meet him on a victorious return home. And if he was aware that not only oxen and lambs might come out to meet him—for such a limitation would contradict the breadth of the vow itself—he was equally aware that not everything which might come forth, could be offered up like oxen and lambs.

Due stress being laid on the fact that the meeting is contemplated as one taking place in consequence of victory, there is suggested, for the further understanding of the vow, a *second point of view*, not yet properly considered. Jephthah's war is a national war against Ammon. The freedom and rights, which Israel had received from Jehovah, are thereby vindicated. The negotiations about the claims to certain lands, set up by Ammon, and refuted by Jephthah, have not been related in vain. They exhibit the God of Israel in his absolute greatness, over against Chemosh, the false deity of the Ammonites. Israel has repented; and it is not one man, but the whole tribe, that is represented as beseeching Jehovah for help. To bring out this contrast between Jehovah and the gods of the heathen, the history of Israel, which rests on the power and will of Jehovah, is referred to in a free and living way. Jephthah is conversant with the divine record. He calls on Jehovah to decide as judge between himself and Ammon (ver. 27), just as in his dealings with the Gileadites he appeals to Him as "Hearer" (ver. 11). He utters his words "before Jehovah," and the "Spirit of Jehovah" comes upon him. The name "Elohim"

metaphor of Serapius. Bertheau's decision for an actual sacrificial death, may probably be explained by the supposition that he did not view the transaction freely and independently, but only with reference to the opinions of others, a proceeding of too frequent occurrence.

1 Cf. Gerhard, *Auserlesene griech. Vasengemalde*, i. 130, 166.

2 Which is the decisive point in the legends concerning Homericus, as told by Servius, and Alexander, as related by Valerius Maximus (vii. 3; cf. my article in Herzog, vi. 472). This also is the turning point in a series of later, especially German, popular tales, in which the "first" is not so much freely promised to, as demanded by, the demon power who, for that price, has supported or delivered the

person from whom the sacrifice is required. This "first" is usually the person most beloved by him who, to his great regret, has made the promise (cf. Müllenhoff, *Sagen*, p. 334, 385, 395; Sommer, *Sagen*, p. 87, 131). Sometimes, the "first human being" is successfully rescued from the devil—for it is he who appears in Christian legends—by the substitution of an animal. In one of Müllenhoff's legends (p. 162, *Anmerk.*) a dog becomes the "first;" in Grimm's *Mythologie*, p. 973 (cf. Wolf, *Deutsche Sagen*, p. 417, etc.), it is a goat. No doubt, a mistaken exposition of Jephthah's vow, had its influence here. It is, therefore, the more important to insist that in the vow nothing is said of a *first* one who may meet the returning conqueror.

is not used, — for that Ammon considers applicable to his gods also, — but always that name which involves the distinctive faith of Israel, namely, Jehovah. All through, Jephthah is represented as familiar with the Mosaic institutes, and imbued with their spirit; and this just because the history deals with a national war against Ammon. The vow also, which Jephthah makes, is modeled by this contrast between Israel and Ammon. The tribes descended from Lot are especially notorious for the nature of their idolatrous worship. The abominations practiced by Ammon and Moab in honor of Milcom (as they called Molech) and Chemosh, are sufficiently familiar from the history of Israel under the kings (1 Kgs. xi. 7, etc.). The sacrifice of human beings, particularly children, formed a terrible part of their worship. They burned and slaughtered those whom they loved, in token of devotion and surrender to the dreaded demon. The same practices were generally diffused among the Phœnicians (cf. Movers, i. 302). On great national occasions, such as war or pestilence, parents vowed to sacrifice their children on the public altars. In the Second Book of Kings (ch. iii. 27) we have the horrible story of the king of Moab, who slaughtered his eldest son on the walls of his city. Without entering farther into this terrible superstition, the explanation of which by Movers is not exhaustive, thus much it is necessary to say here: that the sacrifices it required were regarded by the nations who offered them, as the highest expression of their self-surrender to the idol-god. Hence, it is only upon the background of this practice, that the offering of Isaac by Abraham can be rightly understood. Abraham is put to the proof, whether he will show the same free and obedient self-surrender. As soon as he has done that, it is made clear that such sacrifices God does *not* desire.

A similar contrast is unquestionably exhibited in the vow of Jephthah; only, here the reference is specially to Ammon. Jephthah appears before Jehovah with devotion and readiness to make sacrifices not inferior to that of which idolaters boast themselves. He promises to present to God whatever shall come to meet him. In the form of a vow, and with indefinite fullness, he declares his readiness to resign whatsoever God himself, by his providential orderings, shall mark out. It is precisely in this that the conscious opposition of the vow to the abominable sacrifices of the Ammonites expresses itself. The highest self-abnegation is displayed; but in connection with it, the will of God is sought after. God himself will determine what is acceptable to Him; and Jephthah knows that this God has said: "When thou art come into the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire (which was the Molech-worship of the Ammonites); . . . for every one that doeth these things, is an abomination unto Jehovah; and because of these abominations doth Jehovah thy God drive them out from before thee" (Deut. xviii. 9 ff.). To the expulsion of the nations by God, in favor of Israel, Jephthah<sup>1</sup> him-

self formerly appealed. We conclude, therefore, that the very formula of this vow, made on the eve of war with Ammon, excludes the idea of a human sacrifice.

The sacrificial system of Israel stands throughout in marked contrast with the Canaanitish Molech service. Its animal sacrifices are the spiritual symbols which it opposes to the abominations of Canaan. To see this, it is only necessary to refer once more to the sacrifice of Abraham. God says to him: Offer me Isaac for a whole burnt-offering (לְעֹלָה); and when Abraham is about to give Isaac wholly up, an animal is substituted for him (Gen. xxii. 2, 10 ff.). Since that time, עֹלָה (burnt-offering or whole burnt-offering) is the typical and technical term for an animal sacrifice, symbolical of perfect surrender and consecration to God. The offerings which were thus named, were wholly consumed by fire. Nothing was left of them. Hence, precisely עֹלָה, in its sense of animal sacrifice, presented a strong contrast with the worship of the Ammonites, for among them human beings were offered up in the same manner as the Israelites offered animals.

When Gideon is directed to destroy the altar of Baal, he is at the same time commanded to offer a bullock as a whole burnt-offering (עֹלָה) on an altar to be erected by himself, and to consume it with the wood of the Asherah (ch. vi. 26).<sup>2</sup> Such also is the whole burnt-offering (עֹלָה), to offer which permission is given to Manoah, the father of Samson, without any mention being made of the animal (ch. xiii. 16). The influence of worship on language in Israel, brought it about that עֹלָה, to offer, signifies the offering of an animal which is to be wholly consumed in the sacred fire. It is therefore significant and instructive, when in Jephthah's vow we find the expression: "It shall be Jehovah's, and I will present it as a whole burnt offering (עֹלָה). In no other instance in which the bringing of a whole burnt-offering is spoken of, is the additional expression, "it shall be Jehovah's," made use of, not even in the instances of Gideon and Manoah, although this of Jephthah is chronologically enclosed between them. How strangely would it have sounded, if it had been said to Gideon: "Take the bullock; it shall belong to Jehovah, and thou shalt present it as a whole burnt-offering. For the bullock is presented in order that Gideon may belong to God. It is offered, not for itself, but for men. It is placed on the altar of God, just because it is the property of man. It is foreign to the spirit of Biblical language and life to say of a sacrificial animal, "it shall belong to God," for the reason that the animal comes to hold a religious relation to God, only because it belongs to man, and is offered in man's behalf. An animal belonging to God, in a religious sense, without being offered up, is inconceivable. At least, it cannot be permitted to be.

Very important for this subject, is the passage in Ex. xiii. 12, 13. It is there commanded that, when Israel shall have come into Canaan, every

tions on יָדָה and עֹלָה, but leaves them to be understood in their general and well known Biblical acceptation — עֹלָה being here the symbol of a spiritual truth, while yet it ignores animal sacrifices as little as does זָבַח, see Ps. li. 21 (19).

<sup>1</sup> That it is just Jephthah, and he as the hero of law and faith, who presents this contrast with Ammon and human sacrifices, those expositors have overlooked, who, in spite of the God who was with him, describe this very Jephthah as a barbarous transgressor of law.

<sup>2</sup> Our exposition puts no new and strained interpreta-

first-born shall be set apart unto Jehovah, both the firstlings of every beast "which thou hast" (אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה לְךָ), and the first-born of man. The firstling of such animals as cannot be offered, the ass, for instance, is to be redeemed with money; or, if the owner do not wish to redeem it, he must kill it. The first-born of man, however, must be redeemed. The first-born animal is moreover set apart for God only on account of man, its owner. This substitutionary "belonging to God," it can only represent in death. Hence the expression, "it shall belong to God," is never used of animals, but they are said to be "offered." On the contrary, it can be applied only to human beings; "he shall belong to God," shall live for God, conscious of his own free will and of the divine Spirit, which consciousness is wanting in animals. Scripture itself gives this explanation, Num. iii. 12, where it is said: "Behold, I have taken the Levites from among the sons of Israel, instead of all the first-born; therefore, the Levites belong to me (יְהוָה יְהוּי לִי)." The Levites belong to God for all Israel through their *life*; the first-born of animals, through their sacrificial death. Accordingly, Hannah also, when she makes her vow to God, says, that if a son be granted her, she will give him unto Jehovah; and when she brings him to the tabernacle, that he is "lent unto Jehovah (נָשָׂא לַיהוָה, 1 Sam. i. 28) as long as he liveth."

We perceive, therefore, that in the words of Jephthah, "it shall be Jehovah's, and I will present it as a whole burnt-offering," there can be no mere tautology. The two clauses do not coincide in meaning; they cannot stand the one for the other.

It is necessary, however, to attend to every word of this remarkable verse. For the vow is a contract, every point of which has its importance, and in which not only *one* being is thought of, but in which all creatures, human beings as well as brute beasts, the few or the many, that may come forth to meet Jephthah, are included, and each is consecrated as his kind permits. The vow speaks of whatsoever cometh forth "out of the doors of my house." Many will come to meet him, but he can offer only of that which is his; over the rest he has no power of disposition. His promise extends to what comes out of his own house; and not to anything that comes accidentally, but to what comes "to meet him." It must come forth for the purpose of receiving him. But even then, the vow becomes binding only when he returns crowned with victory and salvation (בְּשָׁלוֹם), and that, not over any and every foe, but over Ammon. If *thus* he be permitted to return, then whatever meets him "shall be Jehovah's, and he will present it as a whole burnt-offering."

The promise must necessarily be expressed with the greatest exactitude. This was demanded by the requirement of the law, that he who makes a vow "shall keep and perform that which is gone out of his lips, even as he vowed" (Deut. xxiii. 24 [23]; Num. xxx. 2). Had Jephthah thought only of animals, he would merely have employed the formula usual in such cases—"and I will present it unto thee as a whole burnt-offering." It would

not have been sufficient to have said, "it shall belong to Jehovah," because an animal belongs to God in this sense only when sacrificed for men. Precisely the insertion of the words, "it shall belong to Jehovah," proves, therefore, that he thought also of human beings. The generality and breadth of the vow makes both clauses necessary, since either one alone would not have covered both men and animals. The first was inapplicable to animals, the second to human beings. Both being used, the one explains and limits the other. The main stress lies on the words, "it shall belong to Jehovah," for therein is suggested the ground of the vow. They also stand first. Were human beings in question? then the first clause went into full operation; and the second taught that a life "belonging to God" must be one as fully withdrawn from this earthly life as is the sacrificial victim not redeemed according to law; while the first limited the second, by intimating that a human being need not be actually offered up, as the letter of the promise seemed to require, but that the important point is that it belong wholly to God.

God demands no vows. It is no sin, when none are made. But when one has been made, it must be kept. Jephthah obtains the victory: God does his part; and the trying hour soon comes in which Jephthah must do his. But, as in battle, so in the hour of private distress, he approves himself, and triumphs, albeit with tears.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Jephthah is deeply impressed with the extraordinary nature of the call he has received. For it is only because he is humble, that he is called. Gideon, in his slight estimate of himself, asks of God to show him miraculous signs on such objects as he points out. Jephthah, regarding the undertaking as great and himself as small, would fain give to God whatever He himself shall elect. His vow is the offspring of his humility. It is pressed out of him by the extraordinary calling which is imposed upon him. His love values nothing so highly, that he should not leave it to God to decide what shall be given up; but the will of God often goes sorely against the heart.

So deeply, also, does every truly humble man feel his calling as Christian and as citizen. "It is difficult to be a Christian," says the heart, terrified at itself. And yet, for him who has been redeemed through penitence and faith, it is so easy. He only would give all, who knows that he must receive all. But the love of the soul that gives itself up, is stronger than its own strength. No true vow is made to the Lord without self-crucifixion. God's ways are incomprehensible. Whom He loves, He chastens. We are ready to give Him everything; but when He takes, we weep. A broken heart is more pleasing to Him than sacrifice. No Passion, no Gospel.

GERLACH: The design of this history (concerning the vow) is not so much to set forth the rudeness of the age, or the dangers of rashly made vows, as rather to show how Israel was saved from its enemies by the faith of Jephthah, and how the service of the true God was restored under the heaviest sacrifices of the faithful.

*Jephthah, returning victoriously, is met by his daughter. The fulfillment of his vow*

## CHAPTER XI. 34-40.

34 And Jephthah came to Mizpeh [Mizpah] unto his house, and behold, his daughter came [comes] out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she *was his*  
 35 only child; beside her<sup>1</sup> he had neither son nor daughter. And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought [thou bringest] me very low, and thou art one of them [the only one]<sup>2</sup> that trouble [afflicteth] me: for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord [Jehovah],  
 36 and I cannot go back. And she said unto him, My father, *if* [omit: *if*] thou hast [hast thou] opened thy mouth unto the Lord [Jehovah], [then] do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth: forasmuch as the Lord [Jehovah] hath taken<sup>3</sup> vengeance for thee of thine enemies, *even* of the children [sons]  
 37 of Ammon. And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for [to] me:<sup>4</sup> Let me alone two months, that I may go up and down [may go and descend]<sup>5</sup> upon the mountains, and bewail [weep over] my virginity, I and my fellows [companions]. And he said, Go. And he sent her away [dismissed her] *for* two months: and she went with her companions, and bewailed [wept over] her virginity upon the mountains. And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her *according* to his vow which he had  
 39 vowed: and she knew no man. And it was [became] a custom in Israel, *That* the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament [praise] the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a [the] year.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 34. — בְּיָחִידָהּ, for בְּיָחִידָהּ, because the neutral conception "child" floats before the writer's mind, cf. Bertheau. The explanation of בְּיָחִידָהּ by *ex se*, implying that Jephthah, though he had no other child of his own, had step-children, would, as Bertheau says, be "unworthy of mention," were it not suggested in the margin of the E. V. — Tr.]

[2 Ver. 35. — הָיִיתָ בְּעַמִּי might be rendered: "thou art among those who afflict me." But the ב is probably the so-called ב *essentive* (Keil), and simply ascribes the characteristic of a class to the daughter (cf. Ges. Gram. 154, 3, a). Dr. Cassel's "only" is not expressed in the original, but is readily suggested by the contrast of the sad scene with all the other relations of the moment. — Tr.]

[3 Ver. 36. — עָשָׂה, lit. "done," with evident reference to the same word used just before: "do, since Jehovah hath done," cf. the Commentary. — Tr.]

[4 Ver. 37. — Dr. Cassel makes this clause refer to the fulfillment of the vow, and renders: "Let this thing be done unto me, only let me alone two months," etc. But it clearly introduces the request for a brief period of delay, and is rightly rendered by the E. V., with which Bertheau, Keil, De Wette agree, cf. the Commentary. — Tr.]

[5 Ver. 37. — יִרְדּוּ-יָרֵא, "descend," i. e. from the elevated situation of Mizpah (cf. on vers. 29, 33), to the neighboring lower hills and valleys (Keil). יִרְדּוּ does not mean to "waver up and down," a rendering suggested only by the apparent incongruity of "descending" upon the "mountains." — Tr.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Vers. 34-36. And behold, his daughter comes out to meet him. A great victory had been gained. The national enemy was thoroughly subdued. All Gilead was in a joyful uproar. The return of the victorious hero is a triumphal progress; but when he approaches his home, his vow receives a most painful and unexpected definition. "It shall be God's, and not belong to the victor" — so runs the vow — "whatsoever comes out of my house to meet me." And here is his daughter coming towards him, with tambourines and choral

dances, to celebrate her father's victory! He sees her, and is struck with horror. It is his only child; and his vow tears her from his arms, and makes him childless. Broad as his vow was, he never thought that he could, even if he would, include *her* in it. This again appears from the circumstance, already adverted to, that the victory and the vow are against *Ammon*. The heathen promised or sacrificed their first-born sons. According to the Mosaic law, also, the first-born males (בְּכֹרִים) belong to God. The same law permitted only male<sup>1</sup> victims to be presented as

<sup>1</sup> [Dr. Cassel manifestly views Jephthah's vow as *swi generis* — not belonging to the class of vows treated of in Lev xxvii 1 ff. and therefore not falling under the provi-

sions there made. Jephthah proposes a whole burnt-offering — spiritual indeed so far as its possible human subjects are concerned, but still bound by the law of whole burnt-offer



whole burnt-offerings (Lev. i. 3). Jephthah's design was to testify that he gave himself up to his God as entirely as the Ammonites imagined themselves to do to their idols. He would have consecrated his first-born son to God—Abraham's child, also, was a boy,—but *he had none*. Hence, he expresses his self-renunciation in the form of a vow, in which he leaves it to God to select whatever should be most precious in his eyes. But of his daughter he did not think. It never even occurred to him that she might come forth to meet him; for that was usually done only by women<sup>1</sup> (נָשִׁים), Ex. xv. 20; 1 Sam. xviii. 6), not by maidens, who remained within the house; and Jephthah's daughter was yet a בְּתוּלָה, virgin. But this daughter was worthy of her father. The victory was so great, that she breaks through the restraints of custom, and, like Miriam (the same terms are used here as on the occasion of Moses' song of victory, Ex. xv. 20), goes forth to meet the conqueror. As soon as Jephthah sees her, he recognizes the will of God. His vow is accepted; but comprehensive as he consciously made it, it is God who now first interprets it for him in all its fullness. The hero had made the vow in this indefinite form, because he had no only and dearly loved son like Isaac. True, he had a daughter; but he deemed himself debarred from consecrating her, and *therefore* makes his vow. God now teaches him that he looks not at the sex of the consecrated, but at the heart of the consecrator. However comprehensive Jephthah's vow, without his daughter it would at most have cost him money or property, but his heart would have offered no sacrifice. God teaches him that He delights not in he-goats and oxen;<sup>2</sup> that that which pleases Him is a broken heart. His heart breaks within him, when he sees his daughter. She is his darling, his sole ornament, the light of his house, the jewel of his heart; and from her he must separate. He comes home the greatest in Israel; he now feels himself the poorest. But he perceives that this is the real fulfillment of his vow; that God cares not for money or property. The highest offering, which God values, is a chastened heart. Obedience is better than sacrifice. The life is not in the letter: every contract with God must be kept in the spirit. Jephthah's faith revealed itself before the battle. That God was with him, was proved by his victory. But his entire self-surrender to God approves itself still more beautifully after the battle. For he conquers himself. He bowed himself reverently before God, before the decision was given; but his deepest piety manifests itself afterwards. He gives his own people, he gives Ammon and Moab, an instance of the power of an Israelite to perform the vows he has made. He suffers his vow to bind him, but does not attempt to bind it. He inter-

ings. Now, that law requires that offerings shall be of the male gender: whereas ordinary vows might embrace females, Lev. xxvii. 4. This view will impart clearness to some of our author's sentences farther on, where he intimates that Jephthah could not redeem his daughter without taking "refuge behind external formulae," i. e. without interpreting the vow, as if it belonged to a class of vows to which it was not originally meant to belong.—Tr.]

<sup>1</sup> [Frauen, by which the author evidently means married women. But נָשִׁים bears no such restricted sense, cf. Ges. Lex. s. v. Moreover, that maidens were confined to the house is a proposition decidedly negated by all we know of the position of the female sex among the Hebrews. See Bible Dict., art. "Women."—Tr.]

<sup>2</sup> Apparently similar thoughts, it is true, are suggested

prets it, not according to the letter, but the spirit Lev. xxvii. 4, 5 prescribes the way in which a woman, concerning whom a vow has been made, is to be redeemed. But his only little daughter, who comes to meet him, he cannot protect. Since God leads her forth towards him, He cannot intend an offering of ten shekels (Lev. xxvii. 5). His pious soul does not take refuge behind external formulae; as we read in connection with heathen vows and bad promises.<sup>3</sup> He recognizes the fact that, since his only, dearly loved child comes to meet him, God demands of him all the love which he cherishes for her, and all the pain which it will cost him to part with her. And in this conviction, he hesitates not for an instant. He believes like Abraham; and, like him, albeit with a bleeding heart, makes full surrender of what God requires.

The scene of Jephthah's meeting with his daughter has no equal in pathetic power. Her we see advancing with a radiant face, giving voice to her jubilant heart, surrounded by dancing companions, and longing to hear her father's happy greeting; while he, in the midst of sounding timbrels and triumphant shouts—hides his face for agony! What might have been a moment of loudest jubilation, is become one of the deepest sorrow. That on which his imagination had fondly dwelt as the crowning point of his joy—the honor with which he could encircle the head of his only child, his virgin-daughter, now the first in all the nation—was instantly transformed into the heaviest woe. "O my daughter, deeply hast thou caused me to bow, and thou alone distressest me." He borrows the words perhaps from the panegyric song in which she celebrates him as "having caused the enemy to kneel,<sup>4</sup> and to be distressed;" and in the extremity of his grief applies them to his child, thus suddenly astonished and struck dumb in the midst of her joy. "But," continues the hero, though his heart weeps, "I have opened my mouth unto Jehovah, and I cannot go back." I promised God in the spirit of sincerity, and must perform it in the same spirit. And there is not in all antiquity, no, nor yet in Holy Scripture, an instance of a maiden uttering a more beautiful, more profoundly pathetic word, than that which Jephthah's daughter, a hero's daughter, a true child of Israel, speaks to her father, even while as yet she knows not the purport of the vow: "Hast thou opened thy mouth to Jehovah, then do according to that which proceeded out of thy mouth; for Jehovah also hath done according to thy word, and hath taken vengeance on thy enemies." She neither deprecates nor laments, gives no start, exhibits no despair—does nothing to make her father waver; but, on the contrary, encourages him, refers him to what God has done, and bids him do as he has promised, not to think, as he might perhaps be tempted to do, of change or modification in her

from a heathen point of view, not only by such examples as that of Iphigenia (cf. Cicero, *de Officiis*, ii. 95), and of Curtius in Roome, but also by that of Anchurus, the son of the Phrygian king Midas, who deemed his own life the most precious sacrifice that could be offered from his father's possessions to the gods. But in reality, these exhibit only the principles that underlie the practice of human sacrifices—principles, with which the spirit of the Scriptures, and their spiritual modes of conception, stand strongly in contrast.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Nagelsbach, *Nach homerische Theologie*, p. 244, etc.

<sup>4</sup> הִכְרַעַתִּי הַקִּרְעָתִי, from כָּרַע, to kneel; Hipbil, to cause to kneel, to subdue. She sang perhaps about the enemies whom he had subdued (cf. ch. v. 27); he sadly applies her words to what she is doing with reference to him self.



favor. Such is the delicacy and tenderness of the narrative, that the modes of thought and feeling characteristic of this heroic daughter, as such, stand out in full relief; for it is in true womanly style that she says to her father: "Since Jehovah hath taken vengeance of thine enemies." The utterance is altogether personal, as her womanly interest was personal. She concentrates the national victory in that of her father; the national enemy in the enemies of her father. God has given him vengeance (נִקְמָה); consequently he is bound, personally, to give to God what he has promised.

Vers. 37-40. **And she said to her father, Let this thing be done to me.** The noble maiden may boldly take her place by the side of Isaac, who, according to the narrative in Genesis, was not aware of the sacrifice to which he was destined. She gives herself up to her father, freely and joyfully, to be dealt with as his vow demanded. Heathen antiquity, also, has similar instances of virgins voluntarily offering themselves up for their native land. But comparison will point out the difference between them and the case of Jephthah's daughter, and will help to show that here there can be no thought of a literal sacrifice of life. Pausanias (i. 32) relates the legend, dramatically treated by Euripides, that when the Athenians, who harbored the descendants of Heracles, were at war with the Peloponnesians, an oracle declared the voluntary death of one of those descendants to be necessary in order to secure victory to the Athenians; whereupon Macaria killed herself. — When the Thebans were waging war with the Orchomenians, the oracle advised them, that, if they were to conquer, their most distinguished fellow-citizen must sacrifice himself (Paus. ix. 17). Antipoenus, who is this most distinguished citizen, despises the oracle; his daughters, on the contrary, honor it, and devote themselves to death. — In the war of Erechtheus with Emolpus, the oracle required of the former the sacrifice of his daughters. They voluntarily killed themselves (Apoll. iii. 15, 11; cf. Heyne on the passage). The same thing is told of Marius by Plutarch. Defeated by the Cimbrians, a divine oracle informed him that he would conquer, if he offered up his daughter, which he did. In all these legends, which might be greatly multiplied, an oracle commands the virgin-sacrifice; in all of them, a vigorous, superstitious belief in the atoning efficacy of *pure* blood, such as appears in the German legend of Poor Heinrich, is the underlying motive; in all of them, also, the virgin-sacrifice forms the preliminary condition of victory. But in the history of Jephthah all this is changed. Jephthah makes a vow, but does not think of his daughter. In his case, the vow is a recognition of the fact that victory belongs, not to men, but to God. He makes a vow, although God has not required one. He keeps it, even after victory, although the extent of the sacrifice had not been anticipated. Neither he nor his daughter think of evasions, such, *e. g.*, as Pausanias (iv. 9) speaks of in connection with similar histories in Messenia. And yet, the offering which each of them brings is as trying as death would be, although it cannot actually involve death. For that point is decided, not only by the different statements of the history itself, but especially by the fact that the offering is made to Jehovah, who, even when, as in the case of Abraham, he himself re-

quires a sacrifice, will not suffer obedience to consummate itself in deeds of blood.

**Let me alone two months, that I may go and descend upon the mountains, and weep over my virginity. I and my companions.** No equivocal intimation is here given of the fate which befell the daughter of Jephthah. She was still in her father's house, an only daughter, not yet married. Since the vow touches her, and devotes her entirely as an offering to God, she must belong to no one else, consequently not to her father, nor to a husband. She cannot be married, and will never rejoice over children. That is Jephthah's sorrow — his house is withered away (יָבֵשׁ), his family disappears. The highest happiness in Israel, to have children, and thus to see one's name or house continued, will not be his. The dearest of all beings, his only child, is dead to him. The same sorrow, and in accordance with ancient feelings with even greater severity, if that were possible, falls on the virgin daughter herself. An unmarried life was equivalent to death for the maidens of ancient Israel. For the bud withers away. Conjugal love and duty, the blossoms of life, do not appear. Unmarried maidens have no place in the life of the state. Marriage forms the crown of normal family life. The psalm (lxxviii. 63) notes it as part of the utmost popular misery, that "the fire (of war) consumes the young men, and the maidens are not celebrated" (in marriage songs). Analogous sentiments are frequent in the life of ancient nations. The Brahminism of India looks upon a childless condition as in the highest degree disgraceful. A woman is always in need of manly guidance and protection; be it as daughter from her father, as wife from her husband, or as mother from her sons (cf. Bohlen, *Altes Indien*, ii. 141 ff.). The laws of Lycurgus concerning marriage, and their penalties against men who did not marry, are familiar. Noteworthy, with reference to the customs of Asia Minor, is an episode in the history of Polyerates, the tyrant of Samos. Being urgently warned by his daughter against leaving his island to go to Oroetus, who was on the continent, he became angry, and threatened her, that in case of his safe return home, she should long afterwards continue to be a virgin; to which the dutiful daughter replied, that she would gladly remain virgin much longer still, if only she did not lose her father (Herod. iii. 124).

**And weep over my virginity.** Not, then, it appears, to mourn her own untimely death. If she was to die, it would have been unnatural to ask for a space of two months to be spent on the mountains in weeping. In that case, why depart with her maiden companions? why not remain at home with her father? A person expecting death and ready for it, would ask no time for lamentation. Such a one dies, and is lamented by others. But Jephthah's daughter is to live — a virgin life, to which no honor is paid, from which no blossoms spring — a life of stillness and seclusion. No nuptial song shall praise, no husband honor, no child grace her. This weeping of virgins,<sup>1</sup> because they remain without the praise of wedlock, is characteristic of the naïve manners and candid, unaffected purity of ancient life through wide-extended circles. Sophocles, in "King (Edipus)" (ver. 1504), makes the father express his fears that "age will consume his children, fruitless and unmarried."

<sup>1</sup> Similar customs may be found even in modern times. In a West-Slavic legend a maiden is blamed for having married without having taken leave of maidenhood, which

it was customary to do in pathetic and elegiac terms Wenzig, *West-Slav. Märchenschatz*, pp. 13, 31.

Electra, in the tragedy which bears her name, says of Chrysothemis (ver. 962 f.): "Well mayest thou lament that thou must grow old so long in unmarried joylessness;" just as she is herself commiserated by Orestes (ver. 1185): "Oh, the years of unmarried, anxious life which thou hast lived." In many other instances of virgins who must die or have died, the fact of their dying unmarried is lamented. So, for example, in the beautiful inscription of the Anthology (cf. Herder, *Werke*, xx. 73): "Dear daughter, thou wentest so early, and ere I adorned thy bridal couch, down to the yellow stream under the shades," and in the plaint of Polyxena (Euripides, *Hecuba*, ver. 414): "Unmarried, without nuptial song, which nevertheless is my due." The daughter of Jephthah laments not that she must die as a virgin, but with her maiden companions bewails her virginity itself.

From year to year the daughters of Israel go to celebrate in songs (לְחַנּוּת, cf. ch. v. 11) the daughter of Jephthah. Of this festival<sup>1</sup> nothing further is known. A reflection of the feelings it expressed might, however, be found in very ancient analogies. After the maiden, with her companions, has wept on the mountains for two months, over the vain promise of her youth, she returns to her father. The mountains are the abode of a pure and elevated solitude, in which her own chaste heart and those of her companions can open themselves without being overheard. On mountains, also, and in unfrequented pasture-lands and forests, abode the Greek Artemis, the virgin who goes about alone, without companions, like the moon in the sky. It was on account of this her virginity, that Greek maidens celebrated her in many places with song and dance; from which practice she derived the name Artemis *Hymnia*, especially current in the mountains of Arcadia. The hymns were sung by virgin-choirs (cf. Welcker, *Griech. Mythol.* i. 585). A similar festival was devoted to Artemis on Mount Taygetus. At Caryæ, also in Laconia, festive choral dances were yearly executed in her honor (Paus. iii. 10). The virgin goddess was also called Hecarge (Ἑκαργή), and Opis or Onpis (Ὀπίς or Οὐπίς). Ὀπίργγος is the song of praise, with which, especially in Delos, and in accordance with peculiar myths, virgins celebrated the chaste Opis, and brought her, as soon as they married, a lock of their hair (Callim. in *Del.* ver. 292; Paus. i. 43). The same custom was observed at Megara with reference to Iphinoë, who died a virgin (Paus. i. 43). Here also tradition leads us back to Artemis, who is styled protectress of her father. That it is the attributes of chastity and virginity which are thus celebrated, is indicated

by the transfer of the custom in honor of a man, in the legend of Hippolytus. "Him," Euripides makes Artemis say, "shall virgins ever praise in lyric songs;" and locks of hair were dedicated to him by Træzenian brides (cf. Euripides, *Hippol.* ver. 1425; Paus. ii. 32).

These observances are a reflection of the narrative concerning Jephthah's daughter, for the reason that they present us with virgin festivals, and with songs to the goddess who did not die, but remained a virgin. In point of fact, the existence of such festivals points to conceptions of life under whose influence woman, contrary to the common rule, lived in a state of virginity. The circumstance, also, that it became a custom in Israel to "praise" the daughter of Jephthah four days in every year, is itself a proof that the practice did not refer to a maiden who had been put to death. For what would there have been to praise in what was not necessarily dependent on her own free will? As in Artemis, so in her, it is voluntary, self-guarded chastity that is praised, just as Hippolytus also is not celebrated because he died unmarried, but because his life fell a sacrifice to his virtuous continence.

And he did with her according to his vow, and she knew no man. Had she been put to death, that fact must here have been indicated in some way. The narrator would have said, "and he presented her as a sacrifice at the altar in Mizpah," or, "and she died, having known no man," or some other similar formula. At all events, it does not "stand there in the text," as Luther wrote, that she was offered in sacrifice. Much rather does this sentence show the contrary. For its second clause is explanatory of the nature and purport of the vow as it was fulfilled. The end to which it looked was the very thing which it is stated was actually secured, that she should know no man.<sup>2</sup> On any other interpretation, the addition of this clause would be inexplicable and questionable. For the fact that she was a virgin in her father's house, has already been twice brought forward. Moreover, it is surely not an event of very rare occurrence, for young women to die before they are married. And why should the narrator have hesitated to speak of the transaction in such terms as properly and plainly described it? In other cases he does not fail to speak of the most fearful aberrations just as they are. The truth is, the whole narrative derives its mighty charm only from the mysterious, and at that time in Israel very extraordinary fact, that the daughter of the great hero, for whom a life of brilliant happiness opened itself, spent her days in solitude and virginity.<sup>3</sup> Death, even unnatural, was nothing un-

<sup>1</sup> On the statement of Epiphanius, that a festival of the daughter of Jephthah was still celebrated in his time, compare my article in Herzog, p. 476.

<sup>2</sup> Hengstenberg, in his valuable essay on Jephthah's vow (*Pentateuch*, ii. 106 ff.), seeks to explain the daughter's destiny by means of an institute of holy women, into which she perhaps entered. This is not the place to treat that subject, which must be referred to 1 Sam. ii. 22. This

much only seems to me to be certain, that by the מְחַנְּנֹת, Ex. xxxviii. 8 and 1 Sam. ii. 22, we are not to understand ministering women. It must be remarked, in general, that the fundamental signification of מְחַנְּנֹת is, not *militare*, but to be in a multitude." From this the idea of the מְחַנְּנֹת, the hosts, in heaven and on earth, is derived.

מְחַנְּנֹת derives its meaning "host," not from military discipline, but from the assembling of a multitude at one place.

The women of the passages alluded to are therefore not ministering women, but persons who collected together at the tabernacle for purposes of prayer, requests, and thanksgiving, like the wives of Elkanah (1 Sam. i.), or to consult with and inquire of the priests. Some, of course, were more instant and continuous in their attendance than others (cf. Kimchi on 1 Sam. ii. 22). At all events, they were women who were either married or widowed. But the history of Jephthah's daughter is related as something extraordinary. Her virginity must remain intact. On this account she is lamented, and a festival is celebrated for her sake. These are uncommon matters, not to be harmonized with the idea of a familiarly known institute. Even among the Talmudists, a female ascetic is a phenomenon unheard of and unapproved (*Sota*, 22 a).

<sup>3</sup> Nor is it necessary to assume anything more to explain the lament of the daughter or the grief of the bereaved father. Even Roman fathers took it sorrowfully, when their daughters became vestal virgins, notwithstanding the great

common. But a life such as Jephthah's daughter nevertheless lived, was at that time unparalleled in Israel, and affords therefore profound instruction, not to be overlooked because issuing from the silence of retirement.

Jephthah performs his vow. That which comes to meet him, even when it proves to be his daughter, he consecrates entirely to God, as a true offering of righteousness (cf. Ps. li. 21: יְבֹרַךְ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (עֲלֶיךָ וְקָלִיל). He fulfills his vow so fully as to put it beyond his own reach to annul or commute its purport. For he fulfills, as he vowed, voluntarily; no one called on him to make his promise good. The background of the history, without which it cannot be understood, is life in and with God. The providence to which the hero commits the definition of his vow, is that of Jehovah. And if God leads his daughter forth to meet him, and thus in her receives the highest object in the gift of Jephthah, the consecration of which she becomes the subject cannot be of a nature opposed to God.

The event throws a brightness over the life of perpetual virginity which rescues it from ignominy and dishonor. Jephthah's daughter typically exemplifies the truth that a virgin life, if it be consecrated to God, is not such an utter abnormality, as until then it had appeared. In Jephthah's fulfillment of his vow and the consequent unmarried life of his daughter, there is a foreshadowing of those evangelical thoughts by means of which the Apostle liberates woman from the dread of remaining unwedded. Not, however, that we are to look here for the germ or type of the nunnery system;<sup>1</sup> but for an example of belonging wholly to God, and of living unmarried, without being burdened or placed in a false position.

That Jephthah through his vow became the occasion of such an example, is already some mitigation of his fate. He has become the father, not of children who inherited his house, but of countless virgins who learned from his daughter to remain free and wholly devoted to God. Jephthah is a truly tragic hero. His youth endures persecution. His strength grows in exile. His victory and fame veil themselves in desolation when his only daughter leaves his home. But everywhere he is great. Whatever befalls, he comes out conqueror at last. God is always the object of his faith. He suffers more than Gideon; but what he does at last does not become a snare to Israel. He also had no successors in his office of wisdom and heroism — just as Gideon, and Samson, and Sam-

honor of such a vocation. They were glad to leave such honors to the children of freedmen (Sueton. *Aug.* 31; Dio Cass. 55, p. 563).

<sup>1</sup> On this point, compare my article in Herzog, p. 474, note.

<sup>2</sup> Poets, unfortunately, have almost without exception considered a sacrificial death more poetical, and have thus done serious injustice to the memory of Jephthah. It was done, among others, by Dante (*Paradise*, v. 66), who herein

uel had none; but it was not his fault that he had them not. His daughter, who resembled a Miriam, gave herself up to God.<sup>2</sup>

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Jephthah's call was extraordinary: extraordinary also is the manner of his own endurance and his daughter's obedience. He parts with her, though deeply afflicted. He yields, though possessed of secular power. His daughter comforts him, though herself the greatest loser. Isaac did not know that he was to be the sacrifice; but Jephthah's daughter knows it, and is content.

1. Thus it appears that a child who loves its father, can also love God. In true devotion of children to parents, there lies a germ of the like relation to God. The daughter of Jephthah loves her father so dearly, that for his sake she calmly submits to that which he has vowed to God. It is written: Honor thy father and mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. To Jephthah's daughter this was fulfilled in the spirit. Her memory has never faded from the books of Israel, nor from the heaven of God, where all sorrows are redeemed.

2. Jephthah might have conquered without a vow; but having vowed before his victory, he fulfills it after the same. Faithfulness to his word is man's greatest wisdom, even though he moisten it with tears. Faithfulness towards a sin is inconceivable; because unfaithfulness lies in the nature of sin. Faithfulness has the promise: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.

3. Jephthah's daughter does not die like one sacrificed to Molech: she dies to the world. She loses a thousand joys that are sweet as love. But no one ever dies to the world and lives to God, without experiencing sorrow. A virgin life is a nameless life, as Jephthah's daughter is nameless in Scripture. But the happiness of this world is not indispensable; and like the solitary flower, the unmarried woman can belong to her God, in whose heaven they neither give nor are given in marriage.

GERLACH: That the Judges whom God raised up, when they thus offered to the Lord even that which they held most dear, did not deliver the estranged and deeply fallen people in a merely outward sense, is shown by this act of believing surrender.

followed the Catholic exegesis of his day (cf. my article in Herzog, p. 470). To be sure, Herder did the same. Lord Byron also, in his *Hebrew Melodies* (see a translation of his poems in Klein's *Volkskalender*, for 1854, p. 47). The names in Handel's *Oratorio* seem to have been borrowed from the poem of Buchanan, published in Strassburg, 1568. Cf. Godeke, *Pamphilus Gengenbach*, p. 672. In Faber's *Historischer Lustgarten* (Augsburg and Frankfort, 1702), the daughter is called "Jephthina."

### *Ephraim's proud and envious conduct towards Jephthah.*

#### CHAPTER XII. 1-7.

1 And the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and went northward [proceeded to Zaphon], and said unto Jephthah, Wherefore passedst thou over [Why

- didst thou pass on — proceed —] to fight against the children [sons] of Ammon, and  
 2 didst not call us to go with thee? we will burn thine house upon thee with fire. And  
 Jephthah said unto them, I and my people were at great strife [in a severe conflict]  
 with the children [sons] of Ammon; and when [omit: when] I called you, [and] ye  
 3 delivered me not out of their hands [hand]. And when I saw that ye delivered me  
 not, I put my life in my hands [hand], and passed over [on] against the children  
 [sons] of Ammon, and the Lord [Jehovah] delivered them into my hand: where-  
 4 fore then are ye come up unto me this day, to fight against me? Then [And]  
 Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim: and  
 the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, because they [had] said, ye Gileadites are fugi-  
 tives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites, and among the Manassites [fugitives of  
 5 Ephraim are ye Gilead, in Ephraim and Manasseh]. And the Gileadites took the  
 passages [fords] of [the] Jordan before the Ephraimites [toward Ephraim]: and it  
 was so, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped [the fugitives of Ephraim],  
 said, Let me go over; that the men of Gilead said unto him, *Art* thou an Ephraimite?  
 6 If he said, Nay; Then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth:  
 for he could not <sup>1</sup> frame to pronounce *it* right. Then they took him and slew [slaugh-  
 7 tered] him at the passages [fords] of [the] Jordan. And there fell at that time of the  
 Ephraimites forty and two thousand. And Jephthah judged Israel six years: then  
 died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in *one of* the cities of Gilead.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 6. — "Could not," is too strong. KEIL: "הִכִּין, stands elliptically for הִכִּין לֵב, to apply the mind, & give heed. Cf. 1 Sam. xxiii. 22; 1 Chr. xxviii. 2, with 2 Chr. xii. 14; xxx. 19." — TR.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

The victory of Jephthah is followed by a repetition of what took place after Gideon's heroic achievement. The overbearing pride of the chief tribe, Ephraim, vents itself in each instance against the victor who has risen up within the smaller tribe, and has become the saviour of the people. Now as then the presumptuous jealousy of the tribe complains that it has not been invited to take part. But this apparent eagerness for war was hypocritical. The thing really desired was a share in the booty and the results of success. Ephraim would help to reap, where it had not sown. The injustice of the tribe was even greater on this occasion than in the time of Gideon. For then it really did render some little assistance, albeit only after Gideon had first led the way. But here it had been called on for help, and had stayed at home. As soon, however, as victory had been obtained, it came with threats and war. But it was not so successful now as with Gideon. That hero, when they clamoured against him, was still in pursuit of the enemy, and was obliged, for the sake of his own success, to allay their pride and presumption by gentleness. Jephthah had no reason for submitting to such arrogance. Nor did the Ephraimites come with words only; they were prepared to use force. They derided the people, and thought that with arms in their hands they could chastise Gilead and humble Jephthah. They will set his house on fire over his head. Then Jephthah shows that he is not only a hero against enemies, but also the Judge in Israel. It is his authority which he tries and proves by chastising Ephraim. But here also, as in his dealings with the sons of Ammon, he first establishes the righteousness of his conduct by clear words. However, if sinful Ephraim had cared for righteousness, it would in no case have entered on this course. It relied on violence, like Ammon; and like Ammon it experienced the chastisement of violence. No Judge of

whom the history tells us inflicts such chastisement and exercises such power within the nation as well as against alien enemies, as does Jephthah. But it was needed; and the humiliation of Ephraim for its sin was less severe than it might otherwise have proved, because the punishment came in the time of Israel's freedom, and not at the expense of that freedom.

Ver. 1. And proceeded to Zaphon. The older Jewish expositors, whom Ewald and Keil have followed, already found in צַפְנָה, not direction toward the north, but the name of a city, which lay beyond the Jordan in the tribe of Gad (Josh. xiii. 27). This interpretation rests on the requirements of the context. For in order to explain verses 4 and 5, Ephraim must have advanced across the Jordan. The remark in the Jerusalem Talmud (*Shewith*, 9, 2), which identifies Zaphon with צַמְרִי, Amathus, Aemath, cf. Amath (cf. Ritter, xv. 1031), is therefore altogether suitable. For this city was still known in later times as a strong point on the Jordan, as Josephus repeatedly states. The *Onomasticon*, also (ed. Parthey, p. 26), says concerning it, that it lay beyond the Jordan, to the south of Pella; for Ritter's oversight, who supposes that the *Onomasticon* identifies Amathus with another Aemath in the tribe of Reuben, is not to be concurred in. Amathus, according to its stated distance from Pella (*in vigesimo primo milliario*), could not lie in the tribe of Reuben — which agrees so far with the fact that Zaphon was in Gad.

Ver. 2. And Jephthah said unto them. It was not related above that Jephthah called on the tribe of Ephraim to assist, as he here reminds them; but that he would do so, was to be expected. But even if he had not done so, what was there to justify Ephraim in its contention and war? Jephthah's answer is not defiant: it allows that Gilead would gladly have accepted help, if only a helper had been at hand. Jephthah would gladly have

wielded the preedence in victory to Ephraim, if Ephraim had only wielded arms against the enemy as bravely as it now uses words against its brethren. But when he saw that there was no deliverer, he put his life in his hand, and God gave the victory. Did not Jephthah devote his dearest possession in order to obtain from God the victory for which he entreated Him?

The Midrash has a thought in this connection, which, when disengaged from its unhistorical wrappings, is judicious and profound. It says that for the things which befell Israel under Jephthah only the priests were to blame. Why did they not annul the vow of Jephthah! Why did they not restrain Ephraim from civil war! It is manifest that a truth is here suggested which applies to all times. It is undoubtedly the duty of persons equipped with spiritual power, to lift up their voices for peace, and especially to labor for concord between the single tribe and all Israel. If they neglect this duty, their candlestick — this also the Midrash intimates — will sooner or later be overthrown.

Ver. 3. Wherefore then are ye come up unto me this day to fight against me? Ephraim's attempt is actually more culpable than Ammon's. In itself considered, civil war between cognate tribes is a disgrace, which can only spring from ungodliness. But the sin of Ephraim, when it proposes to burn the house of Jephthah, is still further aggravated by the fact that it is directed against the restorer of the divine law and the deliverer of Israel. It is moral and national treason. The Spartans also, under all sorts of pretexts, had left Athens to face alone the advancing Persians. But when the battle at Marathon had been won, the auxiliary troops who arrived too late to be of service, praised and applauded the heroism of Athens (Herod. vi. 120). Jephthah dwells on the injustice of Ephraim, who would not indeed fight against Ammon, but now ("this day") undertakes to make war on him (he always stands personally for his people), in order to excuse his armed resistance. Ephraim now receives the punishment which properly it had already deserved at Gideon's hands. It is totally defeated by the hero; and its men find themselves entered on a calamitous flight.

Vers. 4, 5. And the men of Gilead smote Ephraim. It was not Jephthah, as the fine representation gives us to remark, who prosecuted the bloody pursuit. He contented himself with chastising Ephraim according to its presumption; but the people of Gilead had been exasperated by the contempt of the Ephraimites. It is true that the sentence in which the ground of the wrath of the Gileadites over an utterance of the Ephraimites is expressed, is not easily expounded: **כִּי אָמְרוּ**

**פְּלִיטֵי אֶפְרַיִם אֲנֵם נִלְעַד בְּרוּחַ אֶפְרַיִם**. For it is not at once apparent how the Gileadites could be called "fugitives of Ephraim," seeing they were descendants of Manasseh. A closer inspection, however, makes this intelligible. Ephraim raised a claim to participate in war, only in the cases of Gideon and Jephthah, not in those of the other Judges. It is manifest, therefore, that it based its claim upon the fact that Gideon and Jephthah belonged to Manasseh, its own sister-tribe. At any rate, the House of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, had from of old a consciousness of a certain unity of its own. It treated as one with Joshua (Josh. xvii. 14 ff.). It entered together into its territory (Judg. i. 22). Under

king Solomon it was under a common administrative officer (1 Kgs. xi. 28). Now, in the "House of Joseph" Ephraim had the chief voice; for Manasseh was divided, and its possessions lay scattered among other tribes. Hence, it could with some plausibility claim it as its right that no division of the House of Joseph should undertake a warlike expedition without its participation. Nor do Gideon and Jephthah deny this right. "We did call thee," says the latter; "but thou didst not come." Only the manner in which Ephraim raised its claim was sinful, unjust, and arrogant. For it raised it, not in the time of distress, but for the sake of the booty; and instead of applauding a great achievement, it indulged in derision, which exasperated the warriors of Gilead. For in storming at Jephthah for not calling it, it denies to Gilead every right of separate action. "How can Gilead presume to exercise tribal functions, and set a prince and judge over Israel?" "Gilead is no community at all," but only a "set of fugitives," who act as if they were a tribe, whereas in fact they belong elsewhere. They use the word *peletim* (fugitives) by way of contumely, just as among the Greeks *φυγάς* meant both fugitive and banished. Ye are "fugitives of Ephraim," taunted the Ephraimites, and would set yourselves up as an independent principality. In so saying, Ephraim arrogantly put itself in the place of the House of Joseph, to which Gilead also belonged, since it was the son of Machir of Manasseh. "Gilead belongs in the midst of Ephraim and Manasseh." This addition was intended to add point to what preceded. Gilead is nothing by itself, has no tribal rights; it belongs to the House of Joseph. This was true, indeed; and Gilead's descendants lived on both sides of the river (Num. xxvi. 30 ff.); but "fugitives" they were not. The half-tribe of Manasseh beyond the Jordan was as independent as any other tribe; and in the war against Ammon Gilead proper was doubtless joined by men of other tribes, especially Gad. It was therefore no wonder that the men of Gilead became greatly exasperated, and did not spare the Ephraimites even in their flight. Jephthah only defeated them; but the multitude slew them like enemies, and gave no quarter. Thus, sin and contumely beget passion and cruelty. The discord of brethren inflicts the deepest wounds. Nowhere does hatred rise higher, than where concord is natural.

Ver. 6. Then said they to him, Say Shibboleth. Ephraim meets with remarkable experiences at the fords of the Jordan. In Gideon's time, it gained easy victory there over the Midianites whom that hero chased into their hands; now it is itself chased thither and there put to death. In the outset, its men had taunted Gilead with the term "fugitives of Ephraim," and now they are themselves in very truth **פְּלִיטֵי אֶפְרַיִם**. Before they prided themselves upon their tribe name Ephraim, which they haughtily used for the whole House of Joseph; and now, when an Ephraimite came to the stream, he is fain to deny his tribe in order to save his life. The enraged men of Gilead will not suffer one Ephraimite to cross the river; hence the requisition of every one who wished to pass over, to say *Shibboleth*, which no Ephraimite could do, for he could only say *Sibboleth*. What "Shibboleth" meant, is of minor importance; but as its enunciation was required at the river, and in order to pass it, it may be assumed that the Gileadites thought rather of the signification "stream" than "ear," both of which the word has. Every

Ephraimite in this extremity had the feeling afterwards depicted in the Psalm (lxi. 3 [2]): "I am come into depths of waters, and the stream overflows me," *אֶשְׁכָּלֵת אֶמְצִיחֵי*. — When, during the Flemish war, the insurrection against the French broke out, May 25, 1302, the gates were guarded, and no one was suffered to pass out, except such as were able to say, "*Scilt ende friend*," which words no Frenchman could pronounce. (Mense, *Gesch. von Frankr.* ü. 134; Schmidt, *Gesch. von Frankr.* i. 682).

And there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand. The number 42 (7 times 6) appears to be not far removed from a round number; but its occurrence is associated with severe and well-merited judgments on sin. As here 42,000 sinful Ephraimites fall, so 42 of the mockers of the prophet Elijah are killed by bears (2 Kgs. ii. 24); and when the judgment of God breaks forth over the house of Ahab, 42 brethren of Ahaziah are put to death by Jehu (2 Kgs. x. 14).

Ver. 7. And he was buried in one of the cities of Gilead. Herein the mournful lot of Jephthah, resulting from the surrender of his daughter, shows itself. He had no heir, as he had had no inheritance. He was the first and the last in his house. The greatness of his deeds is proved by the fact that they were nevertheless remembered; for in what city he was buried was not known, just as to us Mizpah, the place where he had his home, is also unknown, and as the place of his birth is not mentioned. It is not known what his father's name was; it is not known where his own grave is. "Gilead" begat him, and Gilead received his corpse. He shares no father's tomb, and no son shares his. He was a great hero who lived and died solitary; only faith in God was with him. Six years he ruled; when they were finished, his rest from labor and sorrow began. His name did not return; Gilead's power rose not again; but he was not forgotten in Israel. His sorrow and victory are typical — so the older expositors suggest — of Him who said: "Not my will, but *thine*, be done!"

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Jephthah's vocation was extraordinary, and equally extraordinary was his fate. He gave up everything to God for his people; and yet at last the envy of his countrymen pursues him. They threaten to burn his house, which for their sake he has made desolate. He makes no boast of this, however; yet exercises discipline with a strong hand. Six years he judged, and in the seventh rested from an office that had brought him so much grief.

1. Prior to success friends are few; but afterwards all wish to share in it. While there is danger, he who takes the lead is called valorous; after the victory, usurper. Sin regards not the offerings which the warrior brings, but only the results which he has obtained. The evil will not assist in sowing; but yet would fain participate in the harvest.

2. Life offers nothing to such as serve not God, even though one rise as high as Jephthah. If

Jephthah had not rebuilt the altar of Jehovah in Israel, he had been happier in the desert and the silence of seclusion. The charm of life must be sought in the gospel. Life is short; and though prolonged, full of trouble. Every religion builds its altar for eternity. For Him who has wrought six days for his Saviour, and confessed Him, there opens on the seventh the Sabbath of eternity.

STARKE: The godly are never long without a cross: they are tried at home and abroad; without is fighting, within is fear (2 Cor. vii. 5). — SAILER: The gospel without suffering belongs to heaven; suffering without the gospel, to hell; the gospel with suffering, to earth.

[HENRY: It is an ill thing to fasten names or characters of reproach on persons or countries, as is common, especially on those who lie under outward disadvantages; it often occasions quarrels of ill consequences, as here. See likewise what a mischievous thing an abusive tongue is. — WORDSWORTH: Here we see a specimen of that evil spirit of envy and pride which has shown itself in the Church of God. They who are in high place in the Church, like Ephraim, sometimes stand aloof in the time of danger. And when others of lower estate have stepped into the gap, and have stood in the breach, and braved the danger, and have fought the battle and gained the victory, as Jephthah the Gileadite did (the man of Gilead, which was not a tribe of Israel), then they are angry and jealous, and insult them with proud words, and even proscribe and taunt them with being runaways and deserters, and yet daring to claim a place among the tribes of Israel. Has not this haughty and bitter language of scorn and disdain been the language of some in the greatest western church of Christendom against the churches of the reformation? Has it not sometimes been the language of some in the Church of England towards separatists from herself? Schism doubtless is a sin; but it is sometimes caused by the enforcement of anti-scriptural terms of communion, as it is by the Church of Rome; and the sin of the schism is hers. It is often occasioned (though not justified) by spiritual languor and lethargy in the Church of God. Zeal for God and for the truth is good wherever it be found. Let the churches of Christ stand forth in the hour of danger and fight boldly the good fight against the Ammonites of error and unbelief. Then the irregular guerrilla warfare of separatist<sup>1</sup> Jephthahs and their Gileadites will be unnecessary, and they will fight side by side under the banner of Ephraim. — THE SAME: The Gileadites did not slay the Ephraimites because they did not agree with them in pronunciation, but because they were Ephraimites, which was discovered by their different pronunciation. The strifes in the Church of God lie deeper than differences of expression in ritual observances or formularies of faith. They lie in the heart, which is depraved by the evil passions of envy, hatred, and malice; and slight differences in externals are often the occasions for eliciting the deep rooted prejudices of depraved will, and the malignant feelings of unsanctified hearts. Let the heart be purified by the Holy Spirit of peace, and the lips will move in harmony and love. — THE SAME: That river which in the days of Joshua

<sup>1</sup> [Dr. Wordsworth looks on Jephthah as "one who does mighty deeds in an irregular manner, at a time when those persons who are placed in authority by God, and who ought to employ God's appointed means in a regular way, are faithless to their trust, and neglect their duty to God" and his Church. His work may be compared to that of the Wes-

leys and Whitefields," etc. see on ch. xi. 1. The definition of "irregularity" here given, applies to all the Judges. In a certain sense, they were all irregular; but that Jephthah was so in any special sense is abundantly refuted by Dr. Cassel's exposition. — Ta.]

had been divided by God's power and mercy, in order that all the tribes might pass over together into Canaan, the type of heaven, is now made the scene of carnage between Gilead and Ephraim. In the Church of God, the scenes of God's dearest love have often been made the scenes of men's bitterest hate. The waters of baptism, the living waters of the Holy Scriptures, and of the holy

sacrament of the Lord's Supper — these "passages of our Jordan" — the records and pledges of God's love to the Israel of God, have been made the scenes of the bitterest controversies, and of blood shed of brethren, by those who bear the name of Christ. The holy sepulchre itself has been made an aceldama. — [Tr.]

## EIGHTH SECTION.

THREE JUDGES OF UNEVENTFUL LIVES IN PEACEFUL TIMES: IBZAN OF BETHLEHEM, ELON THE ZEBULONITE, AND ABDON THE PIRATHONITE.

*Ibzan of Bethlehem, Elon the Zebulonite, and Abdon the Pirathonite.*

### CHAPTER XII. 8-15.

8 9 And after him Ibzan of Beth-lehem judged Israel. And he had thirty sons [;], and thirty daughters *whom* [omit: whom] he sent abroad [sent out. *i. e.* gave in marriage], and took in [brought home] thirty daughters from abroad for his sons: and 10 he judged Israel seven years. Then died Ibzan [And Ibzan died], and was 11 buried at Bethlehem. And after him Elon, a [the] Zebulonite, judged Israel, and 12 he judged Israel ten years. And Elon the Zebulonite died, and was buried in 13 Aijalon in the country of Zebulun. And after him Abdon the son of Hillel, a [the] 14 Pirathonite, judged Israel. And he had forty sons and thirty nephews [grandsons], 15 that rode on threescore and ten ass colts: and he judged Israel eight years. And Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died, and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mount of the Amalekites [Amalekite].

#### EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

The special value of the notices concerning these three Judges consists in the contrast which they offer to the fortunes of Jephthah. These three all have what Jephthah had not. They all have children in abundance, and are happy in them (Ps. cxxvii. 3 ff.). Ibzan has thirty daughters, whom he gives in marriage, and thirty daughters-in-law. Abdon, likewise, has forty sons, and looks on thirty flourishing grandsons. The people is familiar with the places of their nativity, and knows where their sepulchres are. Indeed, some of these places, even with their old names, are not lost to this day. For even the native place of Ibzan, although it was not the celebrated Bethlehem, but another in Zebulun (Josh. xix. 15), has in our day been identified as Beit Lahm by Robinson (iii. 113). Keil's remark that we are not to think here of the Bethlehem in Judah, must indeed be allowed, although the Jewish legend does think of it and identifies Ibzan with Boaz.<sup>1</sup> But that this Bethlehem always appears with the addition "in Judah" (so also in Judg. xvii. 7), has its ground in the very fact that the other Bethlehem was not unknown.

<sup>1</sup> The unhistorical character of the legend is the more evident, the more clear it is that chapter xii. treats only of northern heroes, whereas the narratives of southeastern heroes and struggles begin at chapter xiii., and continue down to Samuel and David.

The definition "in Judah" could here be the less omitted because the next Judge also belonged to Zebulun.

Aijalon also, the place where Elon, the second mentioned Judge, is said to have died, and where he probably also resided, seems to be recognized in Jalûn, a place of ruins (cf. Van de Velde, referred to by Keil). Pirathon,<sup>2</sup> the birthplace of the third Judge, whose name Hillel is a highly celebrated one among the Jews of later times, was already recognized by Esthor ha-Parchi in the modern Fer'ata (פרעתה), and has been rediscovered by Robinson and others (cf. Zunz, in Asher's *Benj. of Tudela*, ii. 426; Robinson, iii. 134). They all enjoy in fact every blessing of life of which Jephthah was destitute; we hear of their children, their fathers, and their graves; but of their deeds we hear nothing. They have judged, but not delivered. They enjoyed distinction, because they were rich; but they never rose from the condition of exiled and hated men to the dignity of princes, urged thereto by the humble entreaties of their countrymen. Of them, we know nothing but their wealth; of Jephthah, nothing but his renown

<sup>2</sup> It lies on a Tell, which ver. 15 calls the mountain of Amalek, perhaps from Joshua, the conqueror of Amalek cf. ch. v. 14.



They had herds, but made no sacrifices. Their daughters were married; but the unmarried daughter of Jephthah survives them all as an example of the obedience and faith of every noble maiden heart. They had full houses, and widely known monuments; and Jephthah went from an empty house to an unknown grave: but his name, consecrated by the Apostle's benediction, shines forevermore as that of a hero of faith. Such contrasts the narrator wishes to rescue from concealment. The heathen Achilles, according to the legend of the Greeks, chose immortal fame in preference to length of life and pleasure. What would we choose, if choice were given us between Iban or Hillel and Jephthah? Or rather, let us Christians choose the Cross of Him who lives forever!

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

After Gideon and Abimelech, two peaceful Judges are named, concerning whose official life nothing is reported. A similar relation subsists between Jephthah and his successors. The comparison may serve for instruction. The result of Gideon's deeds was glory and greatness; of Abimelech's tyranny, terrors and punishment. Both kinds of results were brought to view, for the instruction of the nations, in the career of Jephthah. His victory was mighty against those with-

out; his chastisement towards those within. The seed which he sowed in tears, sprang up in joy for others.

The three Judges have everything that Jephthah has not, — children, paternal home, and commemoration of their death. But they have no heroic victory like his, and his only daughter is an example for all time. Jephthah judged only a short time, and died bowed down with grief and loneliness. But neither can prosperity avail to lengthen years. These peaceful Judges judged only seven, ten, and eight years, respectively. How different is Jephthah's life from theirs! But the kingdom of God does not move onward in tragedies alone, but also in meekness and quietude.

The teachings of God are calculated to serve truth, not to promote human glory. Worldly vanity strives for the immortality of time. It is a strange exhibition of human folly, when great deeds are performed for the sake of the monuments and statues with which they are rewarded. In the kingdom of God, other laws obtain. Jephthah is the great warrior hero; but neither the place of his birth nor that of his death is known. Monuments determine nothing in the history which God writes, but only Godlike deeds. The faithful who have died in God, are followed by their works.

STARKE: It is better to bestow celebrity on one's native land, by virtuous actions, than to derive celebrity from one's native land.

## NINTH SECTION.

### THE OPPRESSION OF THE PHILISTINES. SAMSON, THE NAZARITE JUDGE.

#### *Renewed apostasy.*

#### CHAPTER XIII. 1.

- 1 And the children [sons] of Israel did evil again [continued to do evil] in the sight of the Lord [Jehovah]; and the Lord [Jehovah] delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years.

#### EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

The same fatal history repeats itself everywhere. Not one single tribe, the Book of Judges teaches us, is exempted from it. Apostasy is constantly followed by subjection, whether it be inflicted by eastern or western neighbor-tribes. It is written, ch. ii. 14, that when Israel falls into sin, it will be persecuted by all the nations round about. And ch. iii. 3 includes the "five princes of the Philistines" among those through whom Israel is to become acquainted with distress and war. The Book began with the oppression of the Mesopotamian king in the east, from which Othniel, the hero of Judah, liberated the people. After tracing a circular course through the east and northeast, it ends, like the daily course of the sun, in the

west; and the tribe of Judah, with which the narrative began, is again brought forward at its close. As far back as ch. x. 7, in connection with events after the death of Abimelech, we read that God "gave Israel up into the hands of the Philistines and the sons of Ammon." The heroic achievement of Jephthah against Ammon is, however, first reported. (The Judges named immediately afterwards belong to northern tribes, two to Zebulun, one to Ephraim.) Now the writer comes to speak of the great conflicts which Israel had to wage with the brave and well-equipped people of the five Philistine cities on the coast, and which with varying fortunes, continued to the time of David. The tribes especially concerned in them were Dan, the western part of Judah, and Simeon encircled by Judah. How changed were the times



Once, the men of Judah, in their stormlike career of victory, had won even the great cities on the sea-coast. Afterwards, they were not only unable to maintain possession of them, but through their own apostasy from God and the genuine Israelitish spirit, became themselves dependent on them. Dan had already been long unable to hold its ground anywhere except on the mountains (ch. i. 34). Now, the Philistines were powerful and free in all the Danite cities. Chapter x. 15 f. tells of the earnest repentance of the sons of Israel before God. But such a statement is not made here, although the history of a new Judge is introduced. Everywhere else the narrative, before it relates the mighty deeds of a *Shophet*, premises that Israel had cried unto God, and that consequently God had taken pity upon them. Now, unless it be assumed that ch. x. 15 refers also to Dan and Judah, as in ver. 6 the Philistines are likewise already spoken of, it is remarkable that the narrative of Samson's exploits is not preceded by a similar remark. It is a point worthy of special notice. For since the story of Israel's apostasy is repeated, that of its repentance would likewise have been repeated. That which he does not relate, the narrator must have believed to have had no existence. And in fact no such repentance can have taken place at this time in Dan and Judah, as we read of in Gilead. The history of the hero, whose deeds are about to be related, proves this. If, then, such a man nevertheless arose, the compassion which God

thereby manifested toward Israel, was doubtless called forth by the few, scattered here and there, who sought after and acknowledged Him. The power which shows itself in the history of Samson's activity is of a similarly isolated, individual character. It is only disconnected deliverances which Israel receives through him. It is no entire national renovation, such as were brought about by former Judges within their fields of action. Herein the history of Samson differs entirely from the events of Othniel's, Ehud's, Barak's, Gideon's, and Jephthah's times, just as he himself differs from those heroes. Jephthah also speaks as an individual I, when he treats with the enemy; he was in fact the national I, for his will was the will of the people, his repentance their repentance. He can say, "I and my people," (ch. xii. 2): his people have made him their prince. Samson is an individual without a people; a mighty I, but no prince; a single person, consecrated to God, and made the instrument of his Spirit almost without his own will; whereas Jephthah and his people are one in penitential disposition and trust in God. Hence, the circumstance that, although Samson was a Judge, and announced by an angel of God, it is nevertheless not recorded that before his advent the "sons of Israel had cried to God," affords an introductory thought important for the right apprehension of the peculiar and remarkable narratives in which the new hero appears.

### *An angel foretells the birth of Samson.*

#### CHAPTER XIII. 2-7.

- 2 And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose  
 3 name *was* Manoah; and his wife *was* barren, and bare not. And the [an] angel  
 of the Lord [Jehovah] appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold, now,  
 4 thou *art* barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. Now  
 therefore [And now] beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine, nor strong drink,  
 5 and eat not any unclean *thing*: For lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and  
 no razor shall come on his head: for the child [boy] shall be a Nazarite unto  
 [of] God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of  
 6 the Philistines. Then [And] the woman came and told her husband, saying,  
 A man of God came unto me, and his countenance [appearance] *was* like the  
 countenance [appearance] of an angel of God, very terrible [august]: but [and]  
 7 I asked him not whence he *was*, neither told he me his name: But [And] he said  
 unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor  
 strong drink, neither eat any unclean *thing*: for the child [boy] shall be a Naza-  
 rite to [of] God from the womb to the day of his death.

#### EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Vers. 2, 3. And there was a certain man of Zorah. In the times of Israel's penitence, men rose up filled with the Spirit of God; when this was not the case, God had to bring forth the hero for himself. Samson's election was unlike that of any other Judge. Concerning Othniel and Ehud, it is simply said, "and God set them up as deliverers" (וַיִּקְרָא). Barak was called through Deborah,

who was a prophetess. An "angel of God" came also to liberate the people from Midian; but he came to Gideon, a man of valor already proved. Jephthah's case has just been considered. The election of Samson presents an altogether different phase. He is chosen before he is born. An angel of God comes, not to him, but to his mother. Jephthah is recognized by Gilead as the right man, because he has begun (נִלְחַם) to triumph over the enemy. In Samson's case, it is predicted to him

mother that her son "shall begin" (לְהַחֲמִיל) to deliver Israel.

The father of Samson was of Zorah (see below on ver. 25), of the race of Dan; whence Samson is also called Bedan (1 Sam. xii. 11). He bears the beautiful name Manoah, "Rest," equivalent to the Greek *Ἠρεως*, *Hesychius*, — a name sufficiently peculiar for the father of so restless a spirit as Samson. The name of his wife is not given. Jewish tradition (*Baba Bathra*, 91) derives her from the tribe Judah, and with reference to 1 Chron. iv. 3, names her Zeldelponi or Hazeldelponi. The parents were at first childless. The mother was barren, as Sarah was before her. But it is not related of her, any more than of Sarah, that she prayed for a son. This can only be inferred from the similar instance of Hannah (1 Sam. i. 10); but it does not appear, that, like Hannah, she made a vow. Nor is it said of her and Manoah that they were old, as in the cases of Sarah and Elizabeth (Luke i. 7). They were pious, uncomplaining people, who lived in retirement, and had hitherto borne their childless condition with trustful resignation. Nevertheless, it was this childless condition that peculiarly adapted the wife for the right reception of the announcement which is made to her. The joy which it inspires prepares her fully for the sacrifice which it requires. It holds out a scarcely hoped for happiness, which she will gladly purchase with the restraints imposed upon her. But this is not the only ground why she is chosen. An announcement like that made to her requires faith in the receiver. The pious disposition of the parents shows itself in this faith, by which, less troubled with doubt than Sarah and Zacharias, they receive as certain that which is announced to them.

Ver. 4. And now beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor intoxicating drink. For Samson, the child that is to be born to her, shall be a "Nazir of God." The ideas which here come to light, are of uncommon instructiveness. They reveal a surprisingly free and discriminating conception of the life and wants of the Israel of that time. Far-reaching thoughts, which still influence the Christian Church of our own day, are reflected in them.

I. The law of the Nazarite and his vow, in Num. vi., rests upon the great presuppositions which are implied in Israel's calling. In Ex. xix. 6, God says to Israel, "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation;" but he precedes it (ver. 5) by the words, "Ye shall be a possession unto me out of all nations, for all the earth is mine." All nations are God's; but among them, Israel was to be his *holy* people; and the law expresses in symbolic actions the moral ideas through which Israel exhibits itself as holy and consecrated. Within the holy nation, the priests occupy the same relation which the nation holds to the world. Their service, in sacrifice, prayer, and atonement, expresses especially consecration and nearness to God. Moreover, with respect to this service they have likewise a law, whose external command represents the internal idea of their consecration. The command to Aaron is, that the priests, when they go into the tabernacle, are not to drink wine nor strong drink, in order that they may be able to distinguish between holy and unholy, and to teach the children of Israel (Lev. x. 9); for wine is a mocker (Prov. xx. 1). Wine, says Isaiah, with reference to the priesthood

of his day (ch. xxviii. 7), has drowned all priestly consecration. The consequences of intoxication show themselves not only in a man like Nabal (1 Sam. xxv. 36), but also in the case of a pious man, like Lot.

That death is the wages of sin, the Old Testament teaches on every page. The priests are to abstain from wine, lest they die. Hence, also, they are not to touch a corpse, for it has the nature of sin and uncleanness (Lev. xxi. 1), and the priests are to be holy. But although the special official priesthood was given by law to the tribe of Levi, holiness and consecration of life were not limited to that tribe: every one, no matter what his tribe, can consecrate himself to God, and without the aid of office, visibly realize the general priesthood in his own person. It is the peculiarity of the law, that it expresses every internal religious emotion by means of a visible act. It obliges the inward life to allow itself to be visibly recognized. All Israel was to be holy; but when an Israelite, in a condition of special spiritual exaltation, rising above the common connection between God and the people, as mediated by the priests, vowed himself to God, this act also was made the subject of ordinances, by which the Nazir, as he who thus vowed was called, was distinguished from other men, and held to special obligations. Hence, an Israelite can vow himself to God for a time, and is accordingly during that time holy to God in an especial sense (Num. vi. 8). Without holding any priestly office, he enters into a free and sacred service before God. Hence, during the whole time of his vow, he is forbidden to touch wine or strong drink, as if he were constantly officiating in the tabernacle, although the priests, when not actually engaged in service, were under no restraint. The priests, generally forbidden to touch a corpse, are yet allowed to do so in the case of a blood relative (Lev. xxi. 1 ff.); but the Nazir, who is to look upon himself as if he were ever in the sanctuary, from which every impurity is excluded, is not to know any exception. He may not touch the dead body of even father or mother. Yea, he is himself, as it were, a temple or altar of God, as appears from the personal mark by which he is distinguished. The priest comes only to the altar; and is forbidden to wear the signs of the idolaters on his hair and beard (Lev. xxi. 5), and is moreover distinguished by his clothing. The Nazir is in the congregation, his clothing is not different from that of others; but he is himself an altar; and therefore, as over an altar, so over his body, and over the head of that body, no iron may be lifted up. "When thou makest an altar of stone," says Moses, "thou shalt not build it of hewn stone; for if thou lift up thy iron upon it, thou hast desecrated it" (Ex. xx. 25). Accordingly, Joshua built an altar of stones "over which no man had lifted up any iron" (Josh. viii. 31). The reason for this prohibition is grounded, not in the nature of stone, but in the symbolical significance of iron. Iron, as the Mishnah observes (*Middoth*, iii. 4), must not even touch the altar; for iron is used to shorten life, but the altar to lengthen it (comp. my treatise *Schamir*, pp. 57, 58). It is well known that other ancient nations regarded iron in the same way. The Egyptians called it "Typhon's Bones" (Plutarch, *de Osirid.* cap. lxii). Iron, according to the oracle (Pansan. iii. 3, 4), is the image of evil, because it is used in bat-

1 [The English version renders, "tool." The word is **כְּרִי**, in the sense of "chisel." The interpretation "iron"

is justified by Josh. viii. 31, where, with evident reference to Ex. xx. 25, **כְּרִי** is substituted for **כְּרִי**. — Tr.]

de.<sup>1</sup> When, therefore, it was enjoined upon the Nazir to let no knife come upon his head during the time of his vow, the ground of the injunction was none other than this: that since the Nazir, like the altar, is holy and consecrate to God, iron, the instrument of death and terror, must not touch him.<sup>2</sup>

The Nazir is a walking altar of God; and his flowing hair is the visible token of his consecration, reminding both himself and the people of the sacred vows he has assumed. It is the proper mark of the Nazir, as the linen garment is that of the Levite. By it he is known, and from it probably comes his name. It may be assumed that the signification "to devote one's self, to abstain from," of the verb

נָזַר, belongs to it only in consequence of the distinction attached to the נָזִיר. It seems to me that *Nazir* is equivalent to *καρχηκοῦς*, long-haired, Cincinnatus, curly-haired, or *Harfagr* (Harald hinn Harfagri). For it has been justly remarked that in Num. vi. the term Nazir is already accepted as a familiar expression. It may be compared with the Latin *cirrus*, curl, lock, or tuft of hair (cf. *caesaries* = *caeraries*); for comparative philology shows that in most verbs beginning with נ, this letter is a specific Hebrew prefix to the root, so that נָזַר, to guard, to keep, may be compared with *τηρέω*; נָצַל, to bear, with *τλάω*; נָחַשׁ, brass, with *as*; נָחַשׁ, serpent, with the onomatopoeitic *nischen*, to hiss; נָחַם with *gemere*; נָזַל with *salire*, etc. The word

נָזַר would then get its signification diadem, ornament (cf. נָזַר, in the same sense), just as the Greek *κομῆς*, derived from *κόμη*, *κομέω*, comes to signify adornment. To trace the original etymological identity of *cirrus*, *cicinnus*, and the Sanskrit *kikura*, with the Hebrew *nazir*, or to inquire whether the terms *ξύρομαι*, to shave one's self, and *κείρω*, to cut the hair, are connected with the same root, would be out of place here. Precisely those terms which designate objects of primitive interest to man, are most deeply imbedded in the general philological treasures of all nations. But not to pursue these speculations any farther, it must already appear probable, that the use of *nazir* in Lev. xxv. 5, where it is applied to the untrimmed vine of the sabbatic year, is to be explained by reference not to the Nazarite custom of human beings, vowing and consecrating themselves to God, but to the original meaning of the root. The Sabbath-year being time belonging to God (Lev. xxv. 4), no knife was applied during its course to the vine, which from that circumstance was named *nazir*. This would have been an unsuitable designation, if it had been derived from the vows assumed by the human Nazir; for such subjective activity could not be ascribed to the vine. It was the objective appearance of the Nazir, who, whether man or vine, was holy, and therefore had not been touched by the knife, which gave rise to the name. The name suggests the unshaven condition, the long hair, of the Nazarite, not primarily his consecration, although the sacred character of the person, through

the law, gave sanctity to the name and set it apart from common uses, just as the rite of circumcision was indebted for its name (נִכְרִית), not to the sacramental character of the rite, but to the mere act of cutting (נִכְרַל, *σμίλη*), and then reflected its own sanctity upon the name. Long hair, although without any reference to the Nazaritic institute it may be called נִזֵּר (cf. Jer. vii. 29), was the proper mark of the Nazir, because regularly set apart for this purpose by the law. To sanctify the natural life, is the very thing at which the law constantly aims. By its institutions its spiritual requisitions are rendered visible and personal. The circumcision of the foreskin is after all but the national image of circumcision of the heart, and the Nazaritic institute is the symbol of the general priesthood, in which no sin or impurity is to sully the free service of God. But the visible character in which each of these conceptions appeared, was more than a subjective, mutable image: it was a definite and unchangeable law. It was, to a certain extent, a sacrament. It is instructive to see how the relation of spirit and law affects Biblical language and conceptions. The wearing of long hair, a purely natural act, is first, by spiritual ideas, raised into an expression of the general priesthood, in which man is a living altar; but when long hair has become characteristic of the sacred Nazir, whose duty it is to keep far from impurity, a new verb is derived from his name, with the sole spiritual signification of "withholding one's self from what is unclean." The same process may be noted in connection with circumcision. Originally elevated into a sacrament by the intervention of spiritual ideas, incorporated into the law, it affords occasion for the transfer of its name to the spiritual conceptions of the circumcision of tongue and heart. But especially remarkable is the apprehension of the relation between spirit and law in the history of Samson.

II. Why was it necessary for the hero who should begin to deliver Israel, to be a Nazir? Why was the same election and education not necessary in the cases of the other great judges, as, for instance, Gideon and Jephthah? Were then those heroes not spiritual Nazarites, who gave their lives to the service of God? May we not understand the opening words of Deborah's Song as indicating their spiritual consecration to Jehovah: "That in Israel waved the hair, in the people's self-devotion" (see on ch. v. 2)? No doubt; and for that very reason Samson is distinguished from them. For those men arose in times when the tribes of Israel themselves repented and turned their hearts to God. In Samson's day, the situation was different. Dan and Judah were oppressed, but not repentant. An uprising from within through faith, is not to be expected. It is brought about, therefore, as it were from without, by means of the law. The power of the objective, spiritual law manifests itself. It becomes an organ of deliverance, when the subjective source of freedom no longer flows. The angel would have found no Gideon. A prophetic like Deborah, there was not. But the law abides: it is independent of the current popular spirit. It is thus the last sure medium through which the help of God can come to Israel. This significance

<sup>1</sup> The following is said to have been uttered by Apollonius of Tyana: "Let the iron spare the hair of a wise man. For it is not right that it should touch a place where lie the sources of all the senses, whence all sacred sounds and voices issue, and prayers proceed, and the word of wisdom interprets." — Philostrat., *Vit. Apollon.*, viii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Hence, we cannot agree with the explanations cited and proposed in Oehler's article on the *Nazaraat*, in Herzog's *Enzyklopädie* (x. 208). A poem by Max Letteris, on the "Locks of the Nazarite," in *Jolowicz Buttenkranz*, p. 239, has entirely missed the idea of the Nazaritic institution.

of the law, and its objective power, is very instructively set forth before the people in the person of Samson. It is this also which, from Samson onward, becomes the ruling force in the vocation and appointment of deliverers, until the kingship is established, which by the objective rite of priestly anointing, changes David the shepherd-boy into David the victorious ruler. And this instruction concerning the law as a whole, is imparted through the medium of the special law concerning the Nazir, because it is here that the relation to be pointed out comes most clearly to view. For precisely the Nazariteship is, according to the Biblical law, the outflow of unrequired, voluntary consecration to God on the part of an individual. No doubt, to a certain extent, the earlier heroes, though not Nazarites in form, were such self-devoted men. But heroes such as they do not arise in times when the absence of penitence and faith dulls the prophets and Nazarites (cf. Amos, ii. 12). Hence, the history of Samson teaches that Israel would have had nothing to hope for from the Nazariteship, if it had had no other than subjective validity. When faith is wanting among the people, no man becomes a Nazir; but the objective law can make of the Nazir, a man. In Samson's case, the Nazariteship makes the hero, the long hair characterizes his strength, the renunciations of the mother consecrate the child. Samson, a Nazarite from his birth and without his own will, becomes what he is only as such, and continues to be a hero only so long as he continues to be a Nazarite. The Nazariteship is first, everything else second, in him. Its power over him is so objective, that it already operates on him before he is born, before anything like free consciousness can be thought of. The command addresses not him whom it concerns, but his mother, and she, during her pregnancy, becomes a female Nazir, in order that her son may be able to become a hero. It is this that properly distinguishes Samson from the other heroes; and its occasion appears in the fact that the narrator could not, as at other times, introduce his story by stating that the tribes had persistently "cried unto God."

III. The Mishnah (*Nazir*, i. 2) already distinguishes between a perpetual Nazarite and a Samson-Nazarite. And in fact, the Nazariteship of Samson is unique, has never repeated itself, and never can repeat itself; for it is conditioned by the history of his age. Samuel also is consecrated by his mother's vow that he shall belong to God, and that no razor shall come upon his head; but there is nothing to show that the mother observed the Nazaritic rules in her own person, nor is anything said about any virtue in long hair in connection with Samuel. Hannah was wholly self-moved in the making of her vow. The case of John the Baptist likewise stands entirely by itself. Here, the birth of the child is indeed announced by an angel, but his character as a Nazarite is expressed in language altogether peculiar: "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink." John will be great before God, and because of that greatness will drink no wine. Nothing is said about long hair, and the origin of John's vow is placed, not in the act of another, but in the strength with which God had endowed himself. The Mishnah puts it as a possible case that a person should vow to be a Nazarite like Samson; that is, the vow is hypothetically so limited that, while it requires him who makes it to wear his hair long, it is not required to bring sacrifices for defilement. Such a vow was named after Samson, because a part of his life was imitated by it. But properly

speaking, a vow to be like Samson, is impossible. For Samson's vow began not with himself, but with his mother. According to the law in the 6th chapter of Numbers, an Israelite could take a vow upon himself for a longer or, like the four friends of James (Acts xxi. 23), for a shorter period. When the time was expired, he shaved himself, and brought an offering. But no one could vow to be like Samson. It was indeed within the power of a mother to promise to bring up her child like Samson, but even then she had no right to expect the same results as in the case of Samson. It is precisely the impotence of human subjectivity that is demonstrated by Samson's history. It cannot be the wish of all mothers to have Samson-children, when they suffer the hair of their offspring to grow. The angel's announcement, through which the spirit in the law begins to operate even in the maternal womb, is the original source of strength. The Spirit of God operates on mother and son, through the Nazariteship as its organ. The power of the Nazir, the holy influence of the law, opens the man himself; the outflow of divine consecration into the life of the consecrated cannot take place without the Spirit of God. The theological doctrine of the preparatory history of Samson, is just this: that while the law in its immutable objectivity is placed over against the subjective forces of prophecy and heroic inspiration, yet it can never of itself, but only by virtue of the Spirit of God pervading and quickening it, become the organ of deliverance.

The Nazaritic institute is the image of the general priesthood, of the fact that outside of the tribe of Levi, it is possible for man to belong wholly to God. The visible acts which it prescribes, represent, as in a figure, the purity and sinlessness of the heart consecrated to God. In the case of Samson, this Nazariteship begins from his mother's womb. Were it in the power of a son born of human parents, to be sinless through the law, Samson the Nazarite ought to have been sinless. But only Christ is the true Nazarite in spirit, whose life realizes the purity of the idea, and whose free love, rooted in God, continues among men from the womb until death. Jacob, the dying patriarch, announced a blessing "on the head of Joseph and on the crown of the head of the Nazir of his brethren" (Gen. xlix. 26); and there is no reason to doubt that the primitive Christian consciousness interpreted the expression "Nazir of his brethren" not of Joseph, but found in the "and" a link connecting the blessing of Joseph with the person of Him who was a Nazir of the brethren of Joseph. It saw in the passage a prophecy of the Messiah, who though not descended from Levi, was yet the true holy and consecrated high-priest. Hence, the opinion that in the language of the evangelist Matthew (ii. 23), "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a *Ναζωραῖος*," reference is made to the נָזִיר, the "Nazir of his brethren," is not to be hastily set aside. Remarkable, at all events, is it that the ancient Jewish interpretation, when Jacob after the blessing on Dan (Gen. xlix. 17) adds the words: "I wait for thy salvation, Jehovah!" conceives him to glance from the nearer but transient deliverance by Samson, to the more distant but eternal redemption of Messiah (*Beresch. Rabba*, p. 86 c; cf. the Targums on the passage); and that, as already mentioned, the mother of Samson, in 1 Chron. iv. 3, is named Hazeleponi or Zelepni, i. e., "the shadow falls on me," which may be compared with the words of

the angel to the mother of Jesus: "the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee."

Ver. 5. **And let no razor come upon his head.** Here, and in the history of Samuel, the razor is called *בִּזְיָה*, whereas in Num. vi. 4 *לִבְיָה* is used.

Both terms come from the same stem *נָצַח*, *nu-dare*, to uncover, as it were *novare*, to renew, whence also *novacula*, sharp knife, razor. There appears to be less ground for comparison with the Greek *μαρμαίον*, Latin *marra*, the signification "spade" being too far removed. On the other hand, a certain relationship of *נָצַח* with the Greek *ἐκρύπτειν*, Sanskrit *khschura*, shears, may not be altogether denied.

He shall begin. For the Philistines oppressed Israel forty years, and Samson judged his people only twenty. Samson began to restore victory to Israel, he did not make it full and final. The angel of God who calls the hero out of the womb of his mother, knows that he will not finish that for which God nevertheless gave him strength. He knows it, and therefore does not speak as he did to Gideon: "Thou shalt deliver Israel" (ch. vi. 14).

Vers. 6, 7. **And the woman came and told her husband.** Before telling him what the angel had said, she excuses herself for having obtained no particular information about the bearer of the announcement. She should have asked him whence he was, but dared not; for he was a "man of God," with the look of an "angel of God." The angel appeared in human form; but there was an imposing splendor about him, which terrified the woman. Such, probably, had also been the case in Gideon's experience. In her narrative she supplies what we do not find in ver. 3, that the child's character, as a Nazir of God, is to last from the womb until "the day of his death."

#### HOMEILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

The grace of God shows itself constantly more wondrously. It was to be made ever clearer in Israel that all salvation comes from God, and that without God there is no peace. With God all things are possible. He can raise up children for himself out of stones. His works are independent of human presuppositions and conditions. He has no need of antecedent historical conditions in order to raise up men. When in times of impenitence even vessels are wanting, He creates the vessels He needs.

How differently God proceeds in the election of grace from the methods human thought would conceive, is shown by the history of all previous Judges. The deliverer arises there where the natural understanding would never have looked for him. But Samson God raises up in a manner in which no man ever conjectured the growth of a hero to take place. The other Judges He selected as men: Samson He brought up to be a hero.

The earlier Judges were to a certain extent prepared for their work even before their election. Ehud had the abilities of a Benjaminite, Deborah was a prophetess, Gideon a strong man, Jephthah a successful military leader. When the Spirit of

God came upon them, they became Deliverers and Judges. In Samson, God made it known that his grace is able to save Israel even when such persons are not to be found. Before birth, He consecrates the child, through his Spirit, to be a Nazarite. Hence grows a hero.

Earlier Judges were able, like Ehud, to perform single-handed exploits; but they achieved deliverance only in connection with the people. They were all military leaders of Israel, and had to stand at the head of pious hosts. In Samson it is seen that this also is not indispensable. Only individuals among the people were penitent; the tribes, as such, were unbelieving. Therefore the Spirit raised up a single man to be Judge: he alone, without army and without people, fought and delivered.

For this reason, the ancient, deeply thinking church regarded Samson especially as a type of the history of Christ. His birth was similar to that of Jesus. Like the eternal Word who became flesh, he was typically born and consecrated of the Spirit. In Christ, also, it is his sinlessness that presupposes his office as Saviour. The birth of Christ determines his resurrection. He must be born from heaven in order to return to heaven. No one can ascend into heaven but He who came down from heaven.

There was also no penitence in Israel when Christ was born. A few sought the promised Messiah in the prophets. Christ did not come to put himself at the head of a host of believers; but alone, as He was, so He stood among the people. He performs his entire work alone. He needs no legions of angels. His work is unique; and He, the worker, is a solitary hero.

Every believing heart treads in the footsteps of Christ. Fellowship is good in Christian work, but not essential. A Christian can live alone, if he be with Christ.

STARKE: God cares for his people when they are in misery, and often thinks of their redemption before they think of it themselves. — THE SAME: God connects his grace and gifts with mean things, in order to make men know that everything is to be ascribed to the grace of God, and not to the merits of men.

[BP. HALL: If Manoah's wife had not been barren, the angel had not been sent to her. Afflictions have this advantage, that they occasion God to show that mercy to us, whereof the prosperous are incapable. It would not besem a mother to be so indulgent to a healthful child as to a sick. — THE SAME: Nature pleads for liberty, religion for restraint. Not that there is more uncleanness in the grape than in the fountain, but that wine finds more uncleanness in us than water, and that the high feed is not so fit for devotion as abstinence. — WORDSWORTH: Samson is a type of Christ; and in all those things where Samson fails, there Christ excels. Samson began to deliver Israel but did not effect their deliverance (see ch. xiii. 1, xv. 20). He declined from his good beginnings; and fell away first into sin, and then into the hands of the enemy. But Christ not only began to deliver Israel, but was able to say on the cross "It is finished." — TR.]

*Manoah, believing, yet desirous of confirmation, prays that the "Man of God" may return, and is heard.*

CHAPTER XIII. 8-23.

- 8 Then [And] Manoah entreated the Lord [Jehovah], and said, O my Lord [Pray, Lord — cf. ch. vi. 15], let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born.<sup>1</sup> And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband *was* not with her.
- 10 And the woman made haste, and ran, and shewed [informed] her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the *other* day. And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, *Art* thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I *am*.
- 12 And Manoah said, Now let [When now] thy words come to pass. [.] How [how] shall we order the child, and *how* shall we do unto him?<sup>2</sup> And the angel of the Lord [Jehovah] said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman, let her beware. She may not eat of any *thing* that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean *thing*: all that I commanded her let her observe. And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord [Jehovah], I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made [and make] ready a kid for [it before] thee. And the angel of the Lord [Jehovah] said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer [prepare] a burnt-offering, thou must [omit: thou must] offer it unto the Lord [Jehovah]. For
- 17 Manoah knew not that he *was* an angel of the Lord [Jehovah]. And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord [Jehovah], What *is* thy name,<sup>3</sup> that when thy sayings come [word comes] to pass, we may do thee honour? And the angel of the Lord [Jehovah] said unto him, Why askest thou thus [omit: thus] after my name, seeing [and] it *is* secret [*Peli*, Wonderful]? So [And] Manoah took a [the] kid, with a [and the] meat-offering, and offered *it* upon a [the] rock unto the Lord [Jehovah]; and *the angel* did wondrously [and he caused a wonder to take place], and Manoah and his wife looked on. For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the Lord [Jehovah] ascended in the flame of the altar, and Manoah and his wife looked on *it* [omit: it],
- 21 and fell on their faces to the ground. But [And] the angel of the Lord [Jehovah] did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he *was* an angel of the Lord [Jehovah]. And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God [Elohim]. But his wife said unto him, If the Lord [Jehovah] were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands, neither would he have shewed us all these *things*, nor would as at this time have told us *such things* as these.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 8. — **וַיִּתְּנָהּ**. This form may be the imperfect of pual, with the article used as a relative; but it is probably more correct, with Keil (after Ewald, 163 *d*), to regard it as the pual participle, the preformative **ו** being fallen away. Even then, however, the more regular mode of writing would be **וְהִתְּנָהּ**. — Tr.]

[2 Ver. 12. — Dr. Cassel reads the clause more literally: "What will be the manner of the boy, and his doing?" But the rendering of the E. V. correctly interprets the language of the original, and agrees with our author's exposition. Whatever obscurity there may appear to be in ver. 12, is removed by ver. 8; for it is clear that the petition preferred in ver. 12 can be no other than that made in ver. 8. **וְהָיָה כְּכָל הַדְּבָרִים** is the statute or precept (cf. the monastic term "rule") to be observed with regard to the boy — the right treatment of him by his parents; and, similarly, **וְהָיָה כְּכָל הַדְּבָרִים** is that which they are to do to him. The geivitives are genitives of the object, cf. Ges. *Gram.* 114, 2; 121, 1. — Tr.]

[3 Ver. 17. — **וְהָיָה כְּכָל הַדְּבָרִים**; properly *quis nomen tuum*, equivalent to *quis nominat*: **וְהָיָה** asks after the person, **וְהָיָה** after the nature, the quality, see Ewald, 325 *a*. (Keil). — Tr.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Vers. 8 ff. **And Manoah entreated Jehovah.** The narrative affords a pleasing view of the child-like piety of an Israelitish husband and wife under the old covenant.

The adventure with the angel takes upon the whole the same course as the similar incident in the life of Gideon (cf. on ch. vi). The angel here comes and goes as there, yields to entreaties to tarry, receives an offering, disappears in the flame. But the present passage discloses also new and beautiful features, growing out of the mutual relations of Manoah and his wife. The peculiar characteristics of both husband and wife are most delicately drawn. Manoah is a pious man, he knows how to seek God in prayer, and is not unbelieving; but the statements of his wife do not appear to him to be sure enough, he would gladly have them confirmed. And for the instruction and strengthening of Israel, that faith may be full and strong, not being compelled to content itself with the testimony of one woman only to the wonderful event,—God, having respect to the unawakened condition of the people, allows himself to be entreated.<sup>1</sup> But although Manoah sees in the second appearance of the angel the fulfillment of his prayer, he still recognizes in him nothing but a man (אִישׁ). And truly, nothing is more difficult for man, even though he prays, than to receive the fulfillment of prayer! The believing obedience of Manoah to the commands touching his wife's conduct with reference to the promised child, although he conceives them to be delivered by no other than a man, indicates that the coming and preaching of such a man, here spoken of as a "man of God," was nothing unusual. There had probably been a lack only of such obedience as Manoah here shows him. What is more surprising, is, that even when the angel declines to eat of his bread, Manoah yet does not perceive that his visitor is not a man. He had intended, according to the manner of ancient hospitality, as known also to Homer, first to entertain his guest, and then to inquire after his home and name. Such inquiries have interest, and afford guarantees, only in the case of a man. But even the answer concerning the "wonderful" name, does not yet excite his attention. It is only after the angel's disappearance in the flame that he perceives,—what, however, none but a believing heart could perceive,—that he who had just departed was not a man. The wife shows herself more receptive and sensitive to the presence of a divine being. To her, the stranger's appearance, even at his first visit, seemed like that of an angel. At his second visit also, she speaks of his coming in language usually applied to angels,—“Behold,

he hath appeared unto me (וַיֵּרָא, ver. 10). She had needed no proof or explanation. She asks no questions, but knows what he has said to her heart; and hence, she also is in no dread when now it becomes manifest that it was indeed an angel of God. Her husband is apprehensive of death; she is of good courage, and enters the contrary. She had long since foreboded the truth, and belongs to the number of those women of sacred history whose sensitive hearts enabled them to feel and see divine secrets, and whose appearance is the more attractive, the more unbelieving and unresponsive the times are, in which, as here,

angels reveal themselves to women rather than to men. For although it is Manoah who prays that the man of God may come again, he appears not to him, but again to the wife. He waits, however, while she, intuitively certain that though feelings of reverence do not allow her to entreat him to tarry, he will nevertheless do so, hastens to call her husband.

Vers. 12, 13. **And Manoah said, When now thy words come to pass, what will be the manner of the boy and his doing?** It is peculiar that notwithstanding the plain words told him by his wife, Manoah cannot rest satisfied with them. Doubtless, it could not but appear singular to him, that his wife tells him of what *she* is to do, although the call to be a Nazir pertains to the son whose birth is promised. Of such directions, the Mosaic statute contained no traces. It appeared to him as if the report of his wife must contain a misunderstanding on this point. He therefore asks twice, what is to be done with the child, since hitherto he had principally heard only what the mother is to do. Hence, the angel answers him plainly: “What I commanded the *mother*, that do!”

**Nor eat any unclean thing.** It had already been said in ver. 4, “Thou shalt drink neither wine nor intoxicating drink, nor eat any thing unclean.” The older expositors identified this prohibition as to food and drink with that imposed on Nazarites in Num. vi. 4. But this is not altogether accurate, as appears from ver. 14 of our passage. Express mention is here made of all that Num. vi. 4 forbade to be eaten, namely, everything that comes from the vine, and yet it is added, “nor eat any unclean things.” Num. vi. does not speak at all of anything “unclean,” as forbidden to the Nazirite, because no Israelite was allowed to eat what was unclean. Here the angel adds this injunction, first, because it was a time in which much of the law and customs of Israel had perhaps fallen into neglect; and, secondly, in order to serve to Manoah and his wife as an explanation of all that was enjoined upon the latter. The wife was to abstain from the use of everything that can render unclean, because a holy and pure consecration was to rest on him whom she was to bring forth.

Vers. 17 ff. **Why askest thou after my name, and it is Peli?** Renewed attention must constantly be directed to the nice discrimination with which the designations Jehovah, Elohim, and the Elohim, are used in the narrative. Whenever the narrator speaks, he always writes Jehovah. Concerning Samson, the expression (ver. 5) is, that he will be a Nazir of Elohim; because there Elohim indicates the general divine afflatus by which he is to be surrounded, and is the term also used in Num. vi. 7: “For the consecration of his God (אֱלֹהֵי) is upon his head.” When the believing parents first speak, they speak, as in Judg. vi. 20 (see above), of the man or angel of “the God,” i. e., the God of Israel (vers. 6, 8). Especially, however, do they characterize themselves in vers. 22 and 23. Manoah anticipates death, “for we have seen Elohim,” a divine being in general. The wife, impressed by the appearance and announcement, says: “If Jehovah were pleased to kill us, he would not have accepted our offerings.” Whenever full faith returns in Israel, the full name of Israel's God, Jehovah, returns with it.

But when Manoah asks the angel for his name, the reply is not, Jehovah, but פֶּלִי. The Masorets

<sup>1</sup> וַיִּתְּנֵהוּ, as in Gen. xxv. 21; Ex. viii. 25.



reads פֶּלִי, Peli; later authorities (cf. Keil *in loc.*), פֶּלִי, Pilei. In either case, the word is adjective, but identical in meaning with פֶּלִי. In Isa. ix. 5 (6), it is said: "Unto us a child is born, and his name is פֶּלִי." His name is Wonder, Wonder-worker. Isa. xxix. 14, which passage serves literally to explain our present passage, says: "לִבִּי יִסְפָּה לְהַפְלִיא אֶת־הַקְּדוֹשׁ הַקְּדוֹשׁ הַקְּדוֹשׁ, I will continue to show myself doing wonders to this people, doing wonder upon wonder." The epithet of wonder points to the power of him to whom it is applied. He who is a wonder, *does* wonders. In Isa. ix. 5 (6) the child is named Pele, not as a passive wonder, but as active; all its epithets are active: Pele, Counsellor, Mighty God, Father, Prince. Hence, here the angel also calls himself Peli, Wonder-worker. For what he does appears extraordinary. A child was chosen in the matrix, and endued with the power of doing wonders. God testifies in times of distress that He saves Israel by wonders, and does not cease, even in their ruin, to interest himself wonderfully in their behalf. Ordinary means of salvation are wanting. God ever

again manifests himself in Israel as the פֶּלִי, "the wonder-worker," as He is styled Ex. xv. 11. As such He gives his name in ver. 18, and shows his power in ver. 19, when He reveals himself in the wonderful manner of his vanishing away: for the expression הִפְלִיא ("he caused a wonder"), in the latter verse, refers back to פֶּלִי, Peli, of ver. 18. The name Manoah had not understood; but in the deed he recognized the God of wonders.

The key to the whole narrative is contained in this word. It sets forth that Israel's preservation and deliverance rest not in itself, but in the grace of Him who is wonderful and does wonders beyond all understanding, not merely in nature, but also in human life and history. Those explanations are therefore wholly insufficient, which render the word by "secret" or "ineffable." From the old Jewish point of view, this interpretation is intelligible; for to them the external ineffableness of the name Jehovah appeared to be its chief characteristic. Jacob, when he wrestled with the angel, asked after his name. "Why askest thou?" replied the angel, and gave it not. As he wrestled in the night, so he gave no name. Here the unseen corresponds with the unnamed. But in the instance of Samson's parents, the angel is seen. What he says and does is manifest and visible. It is stated with emphasis, that both "saw" (רָאִי). If the angel, by saying, "Why askest thou after my name?" had designed to refuse an answer to Manoah's question, he would have contented himself with these words. But he gives him a name, and that name teaches

that Manoah is to attend rather to the message than the manner of him who brings it. If from the word "Peli" Manoah was to learn that the name for which he asked was "ineffable," he would on hearing it have already perceived that the messenger was no man, for there was only One to whose name this could apply. But it was not till afterwards that Manoah made this discovery. The angel, however, does not design, in this manner to reveal himself. As in the case of Gideon, so here, the deed is to show who the announcer was. Therefore, with fresh kindness, he gives him the name he bears. Angels on earth are always named from their mission and work. The Word of the New Covenant, likewise, when He became flesh, was called Christ Jesus, from his work. The angel in saying "Peli," gave one of the names of God, — that name to which his work here testified (הַמַּפְלִיא). Manoah received it as the name of a man, as later a man occurs named Pelaiah (פְּלִיאִי, Neh. viii. 7).

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

STARKE: The names of God are of great circumference and vast importance, and enclose many secrets. *Nomina Dei non sunt nominalia, sed realia.* — LISCO: "My name is wonderful," mysterious, whose depths of meaning can only be guessed at by human thought, never fully comprehended.

[BUSH: The petition of Manoah reminds us also that the care of children is a great concern, and that those who have the parental relation in prospect can make no more suitable prayer at the throne of grace than that of the pious Danite on this occasion. Who upon the eve of becoming parents have not need to say, as said Manoah, "Teach us what we shall do to the child that shall be born." — BR. HALL: He that before sent his angel unasked, will much more send him again upon entreaty. — THE SAME: We can never feast the angels better, than with our hearty sacrifices to God. — BUSH (on ver. 23): This was a just mode of arguing; for such mercies were both evidences and pledges of God's love; and therefore were rather to be considered as earnest of future blessings, than as harbingers of ill. The woman in this showed herself not only the strongest believer, but the wisest reasoner. The incidents related may teach us, (1) That in times of dark and discouraging providences or sore temptations we should remember the past experience of God's goodness as a ground of present support. "Account the long suffering of God to be salvation." He that hath so kindly helped us and dealt with us hitherto, means not to destroy us at last. (2) That the sinner oppressed with a sense of his deserts has no reason to despair. Let him remember what Christ has done for him by his bloody sacrifice, and read in it a sure proof, that he does not design his death. — TR.]



*The birth and growth of Samson.*

## CHAPTER XIII. 24, 25.

- 24 And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson [Shimshon]. And the  
 25 child [boy] grew, and the Lord [Jehovah] blessed him. And the Spirit of the  
 Lord [Jehovah] began to move him at times [omit: at times] in the camp of Dan,  
 between Zorah and Eshtaol.

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 24. And called his name Shimshon. The Septuagint has Σαμψών, Samson; Josephus also, (*Antiq.* v. 8, 4). This pronunciation refers to the ancient derivation of the name from שֶׁמֶשׁ, the

sun, just as שִׁמְשַׁי (Shimshai, Ezra iv. 8) is pronounced Samsai (Σαμσαι; according to the Vat. Cod. Σαμψά), and as we hear in later times of Sampsæans, a sun-sect.<sup>1</sup> The Masora seems to have pointed Shimshon after the analogy of Shim-eon (Simeon), and to have had the word שֶׁמֶשׁ, to hear, in view. The derivation from *shemesh*, the sun, is, however, of long standing among the Jewish expositors also, and offers the best grounds for acceptance. Other explanations, "mighty," "bold," "desolator," proposed by various expositors, from Serarius to Keil, appear to be without any historical motive. The name may be brought into connection with the announcement to the parents, that their son would "begin to deliver Israel." To Hebrew conceptions, the rising of the sun is an act of victory. In this spirit Deborah sings: "So fall all thy foes, O God; but

אֲדָבָרִי בְּצֵאתָ הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בְּבִקְרָתוֹ, those who love thee are as the rising of the sun in his strength" (*geburatho*, as Samson was a *gibbor*). The Jewish expositors (cf. *Jalkut, Judic.* n. 69) said, that "Samson was named after the name of God, who is called Sun and Shield of Israel" (Ps. lxxxiv. 12). The symbol of servitude is night, and accordingly the tyranny of Egypt is so called; but the beginning of freedom is as the dawn of day or the rising of the sun. The interpretation of our hero's name as *σχυρός*, mighty, by Josephus, is only a translation of *gibbor*, for the sun also is called a hero (Ps. xix. 5, 6). It is an allegorical, not etymological interpretation, and gives no warrant for charging Josephus with philological error, as Gesenius does (*Gesch. der hebr. Spr.* p. 82). That some writers find a *sun-god* in this interpretation, is no reason for giving it up;<sup>2</sup> especially when this is done, in a manner as bold as it confused, as by Nork (*Bibl. Myth.*, ii. 405), who goes so far as to compare a father of Adonis, "Manes" (?), with Manoah, and drags in the "Almanack" besides. The Mosaic law forbade to make idol images of wood and stone as representations of nature; but the use of spiritual, figurative images drawn from sun and moon, is constantly characteristic of Scripture. Notwithstanding all nature-worship as connected with the sun, and its censure in Scripture, God Himself is

called the "Sun of Righteousness." The false syncretisms to which more recent times are inclined, have their origin in the failure to separate rightly the fundamental ideas of Biblical and of heathen life.

The celebrated Armenian family of the Amaduni considered itself to be of Jewish extraction. It descends, says Moses Chorenensis (lib. ii. cap. lvii. ed. de Florival. i. 283), from Samson, the son of Manoah. "Il est vrai, qu'on voit encore aujourd'hui la même chose dans la race des Amaduni, car ce sont des hommes robustes," etc. A parallel to this is afforded by the Vilkina-legend, which places at the head of its narratives the powerful knight Samson, dark of complexion, like an Oriental, with "hair and beard black as pitch" (cf. the edition by von der Hagen, i. 4), and from whom the mighty race of the Amelungen springs (cf. W. Grimm, *Die Deutsche Heldensage*, p. 264).

Ver. 25. And the Spirit of Jehovah began to move him. The fulfillment had taken place. The son had been born. He grew up under the blessing of God. His flourishing strength, his greatness of spirit, are the consequences of this blessing. But the consecration which was on his head, and which through the abstinence of his mother he had already received in the earliest moments of corporal formation and growth, was a power which imparted to him not only physical strength, but also spiritual impulses. No angel ever comes to Samson; God never talks with him; no appearances, like those to his parents, occur to him. Whatever he carries in his soul and in his members, he has received from the consecration that is upon his head. It is from this source that he derives that elevation of spirit which raises him above the level of common life, and urges him on to deeds of heroism.

In the camp of Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol. Zorah was Samson's native place, always appears in juxtaposition with Eshtaol (Josh. xv. 33; xix. 41), and was inhabited by Danites and men of Judah. Its site is recognized in the Tell of Sur'a, from whose summit Robinson had a fine and extensive view (*Bibl. Res.* iii. 153). For Eshtaol no probable conjecture has yet been offered. The "Camp of Dan" (cf. ch. xviii. 12) was a place between the two cities, both of which are located by the *Onomasticon* in the region north of Eleutheropolis. Eusebius in mentioning Eshtaol says, "Ἐνθεν ἐρμῆτο Σαμψών," thence Samson set out, which Jerome corrected into, "*ubi mortuus est Samson*," where Samson died. The "Camp of Dan," if it were not a regular military post, must at all events have had warlike recollections con-

<sup>1</sup> On other similar forms, cf. Selden, *De Diis Syris Synt.* i. 225.

<sup>2</sup> As little reason as there is to doubt the etymology of *Heliodorus*, because the author of the *Æthiopica*, Bishop

Heliodore of Tricca, calls himself a "descendant of Helios," from the fact that he belonged to Emesa, the city of a celebrated temple of the sun (lib. x. at the close).

neeted with its name and hill-top situation (cf. ch. i. 34). It was there that the passion for exploits against the Philistines first seized on Samson. The expression, **וַיִּהְיֶה רוּחַ יְהוָה**, "the spirit began," manifestly answers to the **רוּחַ יְהוָה**, "he shall begin," of ver. 5. The young man was first seized upon by the Spirit of God, **לְקַצֵּם**. The operation which this word **לְקַצֵּם** expresses is not an organic work of faith, such as Gideon or Jephthah perform. It is an impulsive inspiration; the sudden ebullition of a spiritual force, which, as in the case of the Seer it manifests itself in words, in that of Samson breaks forth into action. But yet it is no demoniac paroxysm, nor the drunken madness

of a Bacchant or the frenzy of a rude Berserker but the sober movement of the Spirit of God, which, while giving heroic power, also governed it. How little mythical the history is, is evinced by the fact that, according to the narrator, the place is still known where the young man first became conscious that he had another calling than to assist his father at home in the field. The Spirit of God thrusts him out into public activity. His father's house becomes too narrow for him. His public career begins. What that career is to be, is yet to be revealed to him. But he is driven out, and he goes. From the Camp of Dan he issues forth, a youthful hero, like Percival, in quest of adventure. With what result, is related farther on.

*The opening step of Samson's career: his unlawful desire to marry a daughter of the Philistines overruled by God for Israel's good.*

#### CHAPTER XIV. 1-4.

- 1 And Samson went down to Timnath [Timnathah], and saw a woman in Tim-
- 2 nath [Timnathah] of the daughters of the Philistines. And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath [Timnathah]
- 3 of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife. Then [And] his father and his mother said unto him, *Is there* never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for
- 4 me; for she pleaseth me well [is pleasing in my eyes]. But [And] his father and his mother knew not that it *was* of the Lord [Jehovah], that [for] he sought an occasion against [from] the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion [were lording it] over Israel.

#### EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 1. And Samson went down to Timnath. Timnath or Timnathah, the present Tibneh, situated to the southwest of Zorah, at the confluence of Wady Sumt with Wady Surâr (Ritter, xvi. 116; [Gagge's Transl. iii. 241]), on the border of the tribe of Judah (Josh. xv. 10), was assigned by Joshua to the tribe of Dan (Josh. xix. 43), but had fallen into the hands of the Philistines.

Ver. 2, 3. Get her for me to wife. The history of Samson abounds with instructive notices of the social life of the times. The women lead a free life, not shut up, as they are in the East of the present day. The stranger can see the beauty of the daughters of the land. But Samson cannot yet dispense with the permission of his parents. He is yet in their house, unmarried, a **בְּתוּרָה**. From the choice of Samson, and his mode of life, there comes to view, in the first place, the prevalent, though unlawful, admixture of Israelitish and heathen families and customs. But the barriers raised by difference of nationality are nevertheless manifest. The parents at first refuse their consent to Samson's choice; but they cannot resist his prayer. He is

their only son, — and such a son! full of strength and youthful promise, — therefore it gives them pain.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 4. And his father and his mother knew not. If the mother kept in her heart the saying that her son would begin to deliver Israel, his strength and gifts doubtless awakened many hopes within her. But his wish to marry a Philistine maiden, seemed to destroy every expectation. He who when in his mother's womb was already consecrated to be a Nazarite, desires to enter into covenant with those who have not even the consecration of circumcision, — and that against the law! He who was endowed to be a deliverer and champion of Israel against the national enemies, shall he become a friend of the tyrants, a member of one of their families? For the parents knew not, —

That this was of Jehovah, for it became an occasion of assailing the Philistines; and at that time the Philistines ruled over Israel. The parents could not but be painfully affected, for they knew not what the consequence would be. But although ignorant on this point, they nevertheless yielded. They unconsciously submit to the stronger spirit of Samson; and thus their indul-

<sup>1</sup> [KEL: It is true that in Ex. xxxiv. 16 and Deut. vii. 3 f. only marriages with Canaanitish women are expressly forbidden; but the ground of the prohibition extended equally

to marriages with daughters of the Philistines. For the same reason, in Josh. xiii. 3, the Philistines also are reckoned among the Canaanites. — Ta.]

gence united with the unconscious longing of their son to bring about the fulfillment of what the angel had announced.

The career of Samson is an historical drama without a parallel. Its dark background is the national life out of which he emerges. Israel is under Philistine oppression, because of sin and consequent enervation. It is not without resentment against the enemy, but it lacks spirit. It prefers slavish peace to a freedom worth making sacrifices for. It hates the national enemies, but it holds illicit intercourse with them. Such a national life in itself can beget no heroes, nor use them when they exist.

The influence of this national life is evident in Samson himself. He has unequalled spirit, strength, and courage; but he is alone. The young man finds no sympathy, at which to kindle himself. There are no patriots in search of heroes. There is no national sorrow, that waits longingly for deliverance and a deliverer, and in consequence thereof recognizes him when he appears. On the contrary, luxury and sensuality prevail, eating away the heart of the rising generation; for national character also is wanting, by which, conscious of their power, Israel's youth might clearly recognize their proper goal. Samson too had perished in sensuality, which does not distinguish between friend and foe; but his genius has a seal that cannot be broken. The consecration on his head preserves in his soul an impulse that cannot miss its goal. The law of this consecration is freedom. For freedom's sake, it lends him strength and spirit. Hannibal's father made him when but a boy swear everlasting war against the Romans. Samson, as Nazirite from his birth, is borne onward, less consciously, but even more surely, to a hatred with which he is not acquainted, and to wrath and battle for the freedom of Israel.

Samson is without an army, without a congenial popular spirit, without sympathy and courage on the part of his countrymen,—not even Gideon's three hundred are with him; he has no teacher and spiritual leader; he is alone, and moreover exposed to every temptation to which gigantic strength and corporal beauty give rise; but in his consecration to God he has a guidance that does not lead astray. Hence, that by which others are fettered and subjected, becomes for him the means of attaining his destiny. The paths on which others go to destruction, for him become highways of victory and of strength. It is an act of national treason, when he takes a Philistine wife; and yet for him, it becomes the occasion for deeds in behalf of national freedom.

There is no historical drama in which the nobility and invincible destiny of a great personality, reveal themselves so luminously as in the life of Samson.

It is well known that in the history and fiction of all nations, as in the heroic poems of all ages, love for women has formed a chief motive for conflict and adventure. Even the circumstance which throws so great a charm over the lives and contests of the heroes to whom it appertains, that their love breaks through the confines of their own nation or party, and attaches itself to women who live within

the circle of the enemy, is constantly recurring. But in those narratives, as also in the Persian legend, where Rudabe, the mother of Rustem, is the daughter of her Iranian lover's hereditary foe, and as in Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, in *Romeo and Juliet*, and in the dramas of Schiller,—love is the central point and principal motive. Political barriers, national hatreds, ancient passions, all must yield to love, whether it ends in joy or tragedy. How different is its position in the history of Samson! The antagonism between Israel and the Philistines is justified and commanded. Truth cannot intermix itself with idolatry. The overleaping by sensuality of the spiritual barriers between the two, is the cause of Israel's sunken condition. That love through which Samson desires the maiden of Timnah, can be no joyful goal. Hence, the relation of his inborn heroism to love shows itself to be very different from that which obtains in heathenism and romance. There, the exploits of heroism become the occasions of love; for Samson, romance becomes the occasion of heroism. There, love overleaps the lines that separate nationalities; in Samson's case, it becomes the occasion by which he becomes mindful of the separation. Elsewhere, weakness, sensuality, enjoyment, become the snares which bind the inflamed hero; but for Samson, they become only the occasion for rending asunder the fetters, and for understanding the purpose for which he is endowed with divine strength.

And at that time the Philistines ruled over Israel. The addition of this remark is by no means superfluous. It serves to indicate the background of all Samson's deeds. The mere fact that the Philistines ruled, demonstrated Israel's apostasy and punishment; that they continued to rule, was evidence of Israel's powerlessness and inability to repent. It was *because* they ruled, and Israel was without repentance, that Samson appears so different from Gideon and Jephthah. In the midst of the Philistine supremacy, he enters on his single-handed conflict with them. Notwithstanding that they ruled by means of Israel's own sin, the objective power of the divine law and spirit evinces itself in the hero-nature of Samson, almost against his own will.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

[BUSH: "I wish," says an old divine, "that Manoah and his wife could speak so loud that all our Israel could hear them." By nothing is the heart of a pious parent more grieved than by the prospect of the unequal yoking of his children with profane or irreligious partners; for he knows that nothing is so likely to prove injurious to their spiritual interests, and subject them to heartrending trials. — BP. HALL: As it becomes not children to be forward in their choice, so parents may not be too peremptory in their denials. It is not safe for children to overrun parents in settling their affections; nor for parents (where the impediments are not very material) to come short of their children, when the affections are once settled: the one is disobedience; the other may be tyranny. — TR.]

*Samson goes down to Timnah, with his parents, to speak with his bride-elect. On the way, he meets and tears a young lion.*

#### CHAPTER XIV. 5-9.

- 5 Then went Samson [And Samson went] down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath [Timnathah], and [they] came to the vineyards of Timnath [Timnathah]  
6 and behold, a young lion roared against him [came to meet him, roaring]. And the Spirit of the Lord [Jehovah] came mightily [suddenly] upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent [as one rends] a kid, and *he had* nothing in his hand  
7 but [and] he told not his father or his mother what he had done. And he went down, and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well [was pleasing in the eyes of Samson]. And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion: and behold, *there was* a swarm of bees and  
9 honey in the carcass of the lion. And he took thereof in his hands, and went on [.] eating [as he went], and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them [them not] that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion.

#### EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 5. And Samson went down, with his father and mother, to Timnathah. The parents give way; at all events, they now first go down, with Samson, to see the maiden, and ascertain more about her. The proper object of the journey appears from ver. 7, where we are told that Samson "talked with the woman, and she pleased him." Hitherto he had only *seen* her (ver. 1). His parents urge him to "speak with her," in order to convince himself of her character;<sup>1</sup> and he determines to do so. On this account, the statement of ver. 3 is repeated in ver. 7: "she pleased him" now, after speaking with her, as formerly after seeing her; he therefore persists in his suit, and appoints the time of his marriage. The hope of the parents that the woman, by her want of agreeableness and spirit, would discourage their son, is not realized. No such want seems to have existed, so far as he was concerned.

And a young lion came to meet him, roaring. Samson went to Timnathah to look for a wife, not to engage in a lion-hunt. The comparison of his lion-fight with that of Heracles in Nemea, is altogether superficial and uncritical; and the idea that his victory is to be regarded as the first of twelve exploits,<sup>2</sup> has no foundation either in his spirit or history. The Nemean victory, as I hope yet to show elsewhere, is the expression of a mythical symbolism, and is accordingly, to a certain extent, an *epos* complete in itself. Samson's conflict with the lion is an incidental occurrence. It was neither the object of his expedition originally, nor did it come to be its central point of interest afterwards. The chief difference between the two stories lies in the totally different vocations of the heroes: Heracles wrestles with beasts, conquers the hostility which, according to the Hellenic myth, inheres in Nature; Samson is a conqueror of men, a national hero who triumphs over the enemies of his people and their faith, a champion of freedom, whose strength is so great that he can well afford to ex-

pend a little portion of it in a passing encounter with a lion. Samson is not elected to take the field against lions and foxes, — that would never have given him a name in the history of Israel; but his strength and dexterity are great enough to enable him to make use of even lions and foxes, dead or alive, as means of his national conflict. Among his exploits, only the blows are reckoned, which he inflicted on the Philistines, — not the occasional means which he employed in their delivery. As little as David's royal vocation was rooted in the battles of his shepherd days with lions and bears, so little was Samson's destiny as a hero the outgrowth of his victory over the lion whom he did not seek, but who quite unexpectedly roared out against him. He had left his parents a little space, and when near the vine hills of Timnathah had entered into a wilderness skirting the road, when the monster rushed upon him.

Ver. 6. And the Spirit of Jehovah came upon him, וַתֵּצֵלַח רוּחַ. The peculiar force of *צֵלַח* is, that it expresses the fortunateness of an occurrence, its happening just at the right time. In the very moment of need, the "Spirit of Jehovah" came upon him. In five passages where the expression "Spirit of Jehovah" occurs (ch. iii. 10; vi. 34; xi. 29; xiii. 25, and here), the Chaldee translation renders it a "spirit of heroic strength" (*geburah*); for God also is a *Gibbor*, a Hero, and the translator wishes in this way to distinguish between the spirit of prophecy, the spirit of divine speech, which was also a spirit of God (cf. e. g., the Targum on Num. xxiv. 2-xxvii. 11, and also 1 Sam. x. 6, etc., רוּחַ נְבוּאָה), and the spirit of heroic action. But the original, very justly, makes no distinction; for in the view of divine doctrine all that man does is referred to the Spirit-source. Nothing succeeds without God. Samson needs that moral strength which does not fear the lion. The might, not of his arms, but of his soul, was of the first importance. For courageous undertakings, there is need of divine inspirations. Hence,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Abarbanel in *locum*. The offense of such marriages, the later Jews, with reference to Samson and Solomon, sought to avoid by assuming that the heathen had caused their women to be converted to the true religion.

Cf. Danz, *Baptismus Proselytorum*, § 26; Meuschen, *Nov. Test. in Talm.*, p. 263.

<sup>2</sup> This idea has been set forth with special plausibility by Bertheau, and is justly and ably combated by Keil.

the attack of Samson on the lion is here ascribed to an impulse of the Spirit of God, as well as Jephthah's resolution to attack Ammon in his own country (ch. xi. 29). And it is to be further noted, that in every case the expression is, not the Spirit of Elohim, but the Spirit of Jehovah; for it was He on whom Israel was to believe, and from whom, for his own glory and the salvation of Israel, proceeded the power which Samson possessed against the enemies who knew not Jehovah.

And he rent him. It was a terrible lion that came to meet him: a **פִּיִּר**, a term especially used when the rapacious and bloodthirsty nature of the lion is to be indicated. Bochart explains the compound name **פִּיִּר הָרִיר** very beautifully by means of **רִיר**, especially here, where the fierceness of the lion is opposed to the weakness of a *hœdus*, kid of the goats. **פִּיִּר** is equivalent to **σχιζω**, to rend asunder. As the lion comes rushing towards him, Samson awaits him, seizes him, and rends his jaws asunder. And this he did as easily as if it were a kid of the goats. For the remark, "as one rends a kid," does not imply that it was customary always to rend kids in this manner, but simply means that a kid could not have been more easily overcome than this powerful lion was. According to some ancient statements, Hercules choked the Nemean lion in his arms; and it is undoubtedly with reference to this that Josephus says of Samson also, that he strangled (**ἔγχυε**) the monster. According to a French romance, Iwain, the romantic hero of the Round Table, derived his epithet, "Knight of the Lion," from the fact that after a long struggle he had choked a lion: "il prist Lionian parmi la gorge as poinz . . . si l'estrangla." Cf. Holland, *Chretien de Troyes*, p. 161.

And he had nothing in his hand. He had gone forth to look for a wife, not expecting a battle. If, however, it be nevertheless surprising that a young man like Samson carried no weapons, we are to seek for the reason of it in the domination of the Philistines. Those tyrants suffered no weapons in the hands of the conquered, and hindered and prohibited the introduction of them and the traffic in them (cf. 1 Sam. xiii. 20). The suspicion of the enemy had found matter enough for its exercise, if young men like Samson had come armed into their cities. But even without arms, the heroic strength of Samson everywhere evinces itself; for not iron, but the Spirit, gives victory. Pausanias (vi. 5) tells of Polydamas, a hero of Scourussa in Elis, who lived about 400 B. C., that he overcame a great and strong lion on Olympus, without a weapon of any kind.

And he told not his father or his mother what he had done. It is certainly instructive to institute a comparison between Samson and the numerous lion-conquerors of history and tradition. For it reveals Samson's greatness of soul in a most significant way. To him, the victory over the lion is precisely *not* one of the twelve labors which in the Heracleian mythus is glorified by tradition and art. He wears no lion's skin in consequence of it. He makes so little ado about it, that he does not even inform his parents of it, probably in order not to startle them at the thought of the danger to which he has been exposed. For, at that time, he could not yet have thought of his subsequent fanciful conceit. There is nothing un-

usual about his appearance and demeanor, when he again overtakes them. He exhibits neither excitement nor uncommon elation. The divine spirit that slumbered in him has just been active; but the deed he performed under its impulse appeared to him, as great deeds always do to great souls, to have nothing of a surprising character about it, but to be perfectly natural. Others are impressed to astonishment by what to such persons are but natural life utterances. What we call geniality, what in Samson appears as the result of divine consecration, cannot exhibit itself more beautifully. It is the fullness of spirit and strength in men, out of which exploit and heroism flow as streams flow from their sources. To this very day, it is only small spirits, albeit often in thick books, who watch like griffons over each little thought that occurs to them, fearing to lose the mirror in which they see themselves reflected, and the lion-skin with which proprietorship invests them. Of Samson's victory nothing had ever been heard, had it not furnished him with the means for indulging in a national rillery against the Philistines.

What subjects of ostentation these conflicts with lions have everywhere been. Neither the great Macedonian nor the Roman Emperors, could dispense with them. An Alexandrian poet procured for himself a life-long pension from the Emperor Hadrian, by showing him a flowering lotus sprung from the blood of a lion whom the Emperor had slain. (More definite references to this and following passages, as also discussions of them, will be contained in my *Hierozoicon*. Other material, being already found in Bochart and the older commentators (cf. Serarius *ad locum*), may here be passed over.) The extravagance of the later writers of romance, both eastern and western, was no longer content with common lion-encounters for their heroes. The Arabian Antar conquers a lion although the hero's feet are fettered. For Rûstem and Wolfdieterich such exploits are performed even by their horses. It was only when the crusades put the knightly spirit to the test in the land of the lion, that Europeans experienced the historical terribleness of such conflicts. And few of them had the strength and resoluteness of Godfrey of Bouillon, who stood his ground against a bear, or of the bold and powerful Wicker von Schwaben, who, near Joppa, killed a great lion with the sword in his hand (Albert Aquisensis, vii. 70; Wilken, *Gesch. der Kreuzzüge*, ii. 109). Yet these men are not myths, because such deeds are ascribed to them; nor do we suspect only mythical echoes in the stories that are told of them.

The deed of Samson is executed with such ease and freedom, and represented with such simplicity and naturalness, that if the narrative were not historical, it would be impossible to account for its origin. And yet, according to some, it is a mythical reflection of the legend concerning Hercules. The theories of these critics have their false basis in the Hellenistic one-sidedness by which the relation, according to which the myth must receive its symbols from nature and history, is often quite reversed, so that historical life-utterances are attenuated into ideas and mythical phantasies. It is as easy to show that every lion-conqueror, down to Gérard of our own days, — yea, that all menageries to the contrary notwithstanding, the lion himself must be declared mythical, as it is to prove that Samson's encounter with a lion, in a region where the animal was then indigenous, related without the least approach to ostentation, and per-

formed in the greatness of an unassuming spirit, cannot be historical.

Ver. 8. And after a time he returned. The betrothal had taken place, the wedding was to follow.<sup>1</sup> Samson and his parents descended the same road again. As the hero came to the spot where on their recent journey he turned off from the road, and had the adventure with the lion, the incident came again into his mind, and he turned aside once more, in order to see what had become of the dead lion. Then he found that a swarm of bees had settled themselves in the skeleton of the beast.

The swarm of bees is significantly spoken of as the *עֲצֶרֶת דְּבָרִים*, the congregation of bees. Commonly, *עֲצֶרֶת* designates the congregation of the Israelitish people, as regulated by the law. It is only on account of its wonderful social organization that a swarm of bees, but no other brute multitude,<sup>2</sup> was denoted by the same name.<sup>3</sup> Horapollo, in his work on Hieroglyphics (lib. i. 62), informs us that when the Egyptians wished to picture the idea of a people of law (*παιθήμιον λαόν*), they did it by the figure of a bee.

The skeleton of the lion had been thoroughly dried up by the heat, for which process, as Oedmann<sup>4</sup> long ago remarked, scarcely twenty-four hours are required in the East. In this case many days had intervened. That bees readily settle in situations like the present, long since freed from all offensive odors, is well known from what expositors have adduced from Bochart and others. The instance of the swarm found settled in the head of the slain Onesilans, in Amathus, may also, familiar as it is, be alluded to (Herodot. v. 114). The opinion of the ancients, that bees originate out of the carcasses of steers, wasps out of those of asses, and other insects out of dead horses and mules, may perhaps have some connection with the observation of phenomena like that which here met Samson's eye (cf. Voss, *IdololatRIA*, lib. iv. p. 556, and others).

Bees must have a place of refuge from the weather. It has been observed, in recent times, that at present the bees of southern Palestine are smaller in size, and of a lighter yellow brown color than those of Germany (Ritter, xvi. 283).

The term *דְּבָרִים*, honey, is connected with *דְּבָרָה*, bee (by an interchange of *r* and *s*). It is a remarkable fact, to which I have already directed attention in my Berlin *Wochenblatt*, 1863, that our German [and by consequence, our English] names for wax and honey are perfectly identical with the Semitic terms for the same objects, although in an inverted relation. The Hebrew *דְּבָרִים* (pronounce: *drash*), honey, answers to the German *Wachs* (O. H. G. *wahs*), English, "wax;" and the Hebrew *דֹּנָג* (*donag*), wax, to the German *Honig* (*honec*), English, "honey;" and this is the only proper explanation to be given of the etymology of these German words.

Ver. 9. And he took thereof. The word *דָּרַךְ*,

<sup>1</sup> The assumption of earlier expositors, that an interval of a year must elapse between betrothal and marriage, is after all but an arbitrary one.

<sup>2</sup> [The exception in Ps. lxxiii. 31 (30), is only apparent.

<sup>3</sup> *עֲצֶרֶת הַבָּיִרִים*, "the congregation of bullocks," like the *beast of the reed*, is a metaphorical mode of designating body of men — *Ta.*

according to my view, has nothing to do either with a signification "to tread," or with the idea of "seizing," "making one's self master of;" but has preserved its original meaning in the later *usus lingue* of the Mishna and Talmud, where it bears the signification "to draw out," as bread is drawn out of the oven. The examples given by Buxtorff are borrowed from the *Aruch* of R. Nathan (172 a), where they may be found still more plain. Of bread in the oven it is said, *רודדו*

*בסל*, *ונותן בסל*, "it is drawn out and put into the basket." R. Nathan also justly explains our passage by this signification. For Samson, in like manner, drew the honeycomb out of the hive, and put it on the palm of his hand (*כף*). Kimchi takes it in the same way (in his dictionary of roots, *sub voce*, near the close). Hence also, *מירדה*, *mirda*, is the oven-fork, with which things are drawn out of the fire, Latin *rutabulum*. It is easily seen that a widely diffused root comes to view here (comp. forms like *rutrum*, *rutellum*, from *eruo*, *erutum*, Greek *ρύω*, *ρύτήρ*, *ρυστάζω*, etc.).

He drew out the honey, and as he had no other vessel, took it on his hand, and refreshed himself with it in the heat of the day, as Jonathan strengthened himself with it after the battle (1 Sam. xiv. 29). He also gave to his parents, who likewise relished it; but neither did he now tell them whence he had taken it. It would have involved telling them the history of the encounter with the lion; and though they might not now have been terrified by it, they would doubtless have caused a great deal of talk about it.

Roskoff,<sup>5</sup> in his book *Die Simsonssage und der Heraklesmythus*, 1860, p. 65, thinks that the circumstance of Samson's eating of honey taken from the lion's skeleton, is a proof that the rule by which the Nazarite was required to abstain from anything unclean had not yet received its later extension, and that consequently the Mosaic law was not yet in existence. We cannot regard this position as very well founded. For this reason, if no other, that the Book which is intimately acquainted with the Mosaic law, relates this act of Samson without the addition of any explanatory remark. And it has very good reason for adding no explanation; for the objection proceeds upon a view of Samson's Nazaritic character which is foreign to the Book, and greatly affects the proper understanding of his history. The truth is, the hero was not at all such a Nazarite as the sixth chapter of Numbers contemplates. The introduction to his history clearly shows that definite prescriptions concerning food and drink were given only to his mother; concerning himself,<sup>6</sup> nothing more is said than that no razor is to come upon his head. It is only upon this latter obligation, as the history shows, that the strength of his Nazariteship depends. The Nazariteship, abstractly considered, is an image of the general priesthood. On Samson particularly there rests a glimmer of that gospel freedom, with reference to which the Apostle says to the disciples: "All things are

<sup>5</sup> Hence also the Sept. *συναγωγῆς*.

<sup>6</sup> *Vermischte Samml. aus der Naturkunde*, vi. 135. Rosenmüller, *Morgenland*, No. 462.

<sup>7</sup> On a general refutation of whom we cannot here enter He agrees in his results, for the most part, with Bertheau and Ewald.

<sup>8</sup> *Jerusalem Talmud*, "Nazir," cap. 1, Hal. 2, etc.

yours." From the consecration of his spirit, Samson has a typical strength by which to the pure all things are pure. Samson can do everything, and that, as the ancients explained of their Samson-Nazarite, without sin-offerings; only one thing he may not do,—desecrate this his consecration, sin against this spirit itself. But this his freedom is naturally held within bounds by his calling. It must have war against the Philistines for its cause and goal. The Apostle's meaning is, All things are yours, if ye be Christ's. Samson may do everything, when the honor of his God against the hereditary enemy is at stake. This freedom was given him, not that he might live riotously, as with Delilah—for which reason he fell—but only to do battle. Herein lies the key to the profound observation of the narrator, when the parents of Samson did not approve of his proposed marriage with the woman of Timnah: "They knew not that this was an occasion from God." The whole Samson was an occasion from God against the Philistines. It is therefore also with a profound purpose that the hero himself is not commanded to abstain from wine and unclean things. He is born, to a certain extent, in a state of pure consecration, in which for the ends of this consecration everything becomes pure to him. He continues to be the hero, even when he eats that which is unclean, and marries foreign women, which yet, according to ch. iii. 6, forms one of the causes of divine judgments; but he falls, when in divulging his secret he does that which, though not in itself forbidden, profanes his consecration.

Samson's character, in that spiritual freedom which makes war on the Philistines, is a type of the true Christian freedom,—so long as it does not consume itself.

It would therefore lead to useless hair-splitting, to inquire whether it was right in Samson to bring of the honey to his parents without telling them whence he had taken it. He brought it as an evidence of his childlike heart, and committed no wrong. It was a Talmudic question, whether the honey was unclean, although the rule enjoined on Samson's mother extended only to the time of her son's birth. He was silent about the history of the honey, in order to avoid boasting.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Samson is stronger than lions and more cunning than foxes. He must be this in order to conquer the Philistines. For there is no one to assist him. The Philistines have encrusted, terrified, desecrated Israel. Israel, on their account,

has no more faith in its faith. It is afraid of the strength of its own spirit. Desirous of peace at any price, it has surrendered even its own sentiments and beliefs.

Beautiful, on this account, is the use which the ancient church made of Samson the Lion-slayer as a type of Christ. The rending lion is also an image of Satan, the destroyer of men. As Samson rends the lion's jaws asunder with his hands, so Christ tears to pieces the kingdom of Satan and death. Hence the old custom of putting the picture of Samson the Lion-conqueror on church doors. But that lion who goes about seeking to snatch us away from Christ is still ever terrible. The battle with him is still daily new. The victory, however, is sure, if only we believe in the conquest of the true Samson. But if we have the Spirit only on our tongues, and not in our souls, we shall never conquer like Him. Only faith will enable us to stand. But every victory flows with honey; and with it we refresh father and mother. Every new victory strengthens the old love.

STARKE: They who do the greatest works, make the least noise and boasting about them. Enmity and war are easily begun, but not so easily ended. The Philistines could readily make an enemy of Samson, but to make a friend of him was more difficult.—THE SAME: Christian, imitate, not Samson's deed, but his faith and obedience.—LISCO: Samson's life and deeds can be rightly judged only when viewed, not as those of a private person, but as the activity of a theocratic deliverer and judge.

[WORDSWORTH: "He told not his father or his mother," though they were not far from him at the time (ver. 5). So our Lord would not that any one should spread abroad his fame. He said, "Tell no man" (Matt. viii. 4; xvi. 20). Hitherto, then, Samson, in his spiritual gifts, in his self-dedication to God, in his strength, courage, and victory, and in his meekness and humility, is an eminent type of Christ. But afterwards he degenerates, and becomes in many respects a contrast to Him. And thus, in comparing the type and the antitype, we have both encouragement and warning, especially as to the right use to be made of spiritual gifts, and as to the danger of their abuse.—BR. HALL: The mercies of God are ill bestowed upon us, if we cannot step aside to view the monuments of his deliverances; dangers may be at once past and forgotten. As Samson had not found his honeycomb, if he had not turned aside to see his lion, so we shall lose the comfort of God's benefits, if we do not renew our perils by meditation.—TR.]

*Samson's wedding-feast. He proposes a riddle to his companions.*

#### CHAPTER XIV. 10-14.

10 So [And] his father went down unto the woman: and Samson made there a  
11 feast; for so used [it is customary for] the young men to do. And it came to  
pass, when they saw him, that they brought [chose] thirty companions to be with  
12 him. And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you: if ye  
can certainly [if ye indeed] declare it me within the seven days of the feast, and  
find it out, then I will give you thirty sheets [shirts]<sup>1</sup> and thirty change [changes]



- 13 of garments But if ye cannot declare *it* me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets [shirts] and thirty change [changes] of garments. And they said unto him, Put  
14 forth thy riddle, that we may hear it. And he said unto them, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three days expound the riddle.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 12. — **סָדִינִים**. Dr. Cassel translates this word by the general term *Gewande*, garments. He apparently considers the only distinction between the **סָדִינִים** and the **הַלְלֹת בְּגָדִים**, to be that between common and more costly garments (see below). But the **סָדִינִים** are probably under-garments, *tunicæ*, shirts, made of a fine linen. The derivation of the word **סָדִינִים**, and whether it be related to the Greek *σινδων* (Sept.), can hardly be determined. — Tr.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 10. And his father went down unto the woman. The whole narrative is full of naive delineations of manners and customs. The father's present visit to the maiden is in his son's behalf, and expresses the parental approbation of Samson's marriage engagement. That the parents of the bride were consulted about the marriage is not indicated in any way, although we know that the father was still living (cf. ch. xv. 6). Are we to suppose that among the Philistines an application to the parents was unnecessary? Did not Isaac, through Eliezer, make suit for Rebecca to her father? and Jacob to Laban? Was not the same custom current also among other, heathen nations? Is not the young woman in the nuptial song of Catullus (*Carmen*, xii. ver. 61) exhorted that it is the father and mother who must be obeyed?<sup>1</sup> The Philistine women seem really to have enjoyed a position of great social freedom. They are seen on the street, and are visited by men, without being on that account regarded as "harlots."

And Samson made there a feast; for such is the custom of young men. He did not take her with him into his father's house,<sup>2</sup> after the marriage was settled, but remained in Timnah, and there gave the feast. Among the Philistines it was customary for the bridegroom (**פָּרוֹחַ**) to arrange the banquet. At the wedding of Cana, also, described by St. John (ch. ii. 10), the bridegroom seems to have been the entertainer. But this was not the case when Laban gave his daughter to Jacob, or when Tobias married the daughter of Raguel (Tobit, viii. 19). In those instances, the parents of the bride give the feast.

Marriage feasts were much liked among all nations. When, in the *Odyssey* (iv. 3), Telemachus comes to king Menelaus, the latter is just celebrating the nuptial feasts of his children. Among the Romans, the name *repotia*<sup>3</sup> was in use for the entertainments which (according to Festus) were given on the day after the marriage at the new husband's house (cf. Horace, *Sat.* ii. 60). Plutarch makes the question, Why even law-givers have appointed a certain degree of luxury to be observed in connection with such feasts, a subject of discussion in his *Synposium* (lih. iv. quæst. 3). Samson's marriage-celebration lasted seven days. The parents-in-law of Tobias, in their joy, appropriated fourteen days. But down to late times luxury and sensuality are more characteristic of such feasts

than is compatible with their proper observance. Neither the spirit of Samson, nor the piety of Tobias fills and governs them, albeit in some instances the duration of those ancient celebrations may be rivaled. We hardly seem to have taken a long leap backward, when in the fourteenth century we hear it provided by the Ravensburg Regulation concerning weddings, that "the nuptial celebration shall only last till the next day, no longer" (Birlinger, *Volksthümliches*, ii. 399); or when, in 1643, the Würtzburg bishop, John Philip, orders that the custom of protracting banquets through three days be discontinued, "as a useless and hurtful expense" (Schaltjahr, i. 445). For even in our day, like excesses occur, wherever there is money and wantonness. So late as ten years ago, it was stated that in Swabia the feasting attendant upon a village wedding still frequently lasted from four to five days (Meier, *Schwab. Sagen*, p. 479).

Ver. 11. And when they saw him, they chose thirty companions, who were with him. A bridegroom is like a king's son. His wedding is his coronation. Hence, also, crown and chaplet are not wanting for the wedded pair. For the same reason they have also a following. These are ancient, universally diffused ideas, which it would lead us too far to collect together from all nations and languages. In comparatively recent times, the Jews have minutely traced the analogy of the bridegroom with the king, through all the customs pertaining to them respectively, even to the point of calling attention to the fact that **קָרֵן** and **מָלֵךְ** have each three letters. (On the proofs

that **הָרֵן דּוֹמֵה לַמֶּלֶךְ**,<sup>4</sup> compare the liturgical works, of which *Tania*, ed. Cremona, 1565, p. 130, and *Taschbaz*, of R. Meier of Rotenburg, p. 45, may here be especially cited.)

Accordingly, the **בְּרִאוֹתָם**, "when they saw him," is to be so understood, that when Samson appeared, *i. e.* publicly, both at the time of the marriage, concerning the manner of which nothing is said, and during the seven festive days, it was always with a retinue of thirty companions, somewhat as in our day brides are still attended by suites of bridesmaids.

**וַיִּקְרָא**, and they chose. It was customary, no doubt, when a daughter or son of the city was married, for the bridegroom to provide himself with a retinue. As Samson was a stranger, his

1 *Quibus parare necesse est.*

2 Because she was an alien. He does not impose upon his father's house that in which he allows himself. That would have been an insult to the law and customs of Israel.

3 "An after drinking." The Sept. renders **בְּשִׁתְּהֶם** (ver. 10) by *πότος*, a drinking.

4 Cf. Jalkut, *Shophetim*, n. 70, p. 11 c.



bride and her father told him whom to invite, and therefore the writer says "they chose." The number of young men chosen was thirty. Samson's parents seem to have been in good circumstances, and hence the bridegroom appeared not without splendor, as the giver of a seven days' feast. That thirty was the unvarying number, cannot be maintained. The ancients had a philosophical number, which they called the "wedding," and which consisted of five or six. (Both chosen on account of their being formed from  $2 \times 3$  and  $2 + 3$ , one even, the other odd.) But  $5 \times 6$  is also  $= 30$ .<sup>1</sup> In later times, also, the Jews had many brides'-men. In Worms, their number had been restricted to eight. The later Jews called such a brides'-man שושבין, which term does not, however, come from the Syriac, as Sachs thought (*Beiträge*, i. 82), but is only the Hebraized form of *sponsor* (otherwise *auspex*, *paranympheus*, cf. Matt. ix. 15). — The idea of Josephus, which Bertheau adopts, that the thirty young men were to watch Samson, is to be rejected. For, in the first place, nothing was as yet known concerning Samson that could render him so seriously suspected; and, in the next place, it is manifest from ver. 15, that they were invited on the part of the bridegroom himself.

Vers. 12, 13. I will put forth a riddle unto you. The custom of propounding riddles for amusement is very ancient. The acuteness which exercised itself therein, was, as it were, the counterpart of that which invented the language of figure, signs, and symbols. For it brought to light again the secrets which the latter had locked up. "In ancient times," says Plutarch, "the Greeks were already in the habit of propounding riddles to each other." It is related of the maiden Cleobuline, the daughter of a wise man, that she was so ingenious, as to play with riddles as if they were dice, propounding or solving them with equal ease. The banquet of the seven wise men, in Plutarch, shows the high estimation in which the diversion was held; and Cleodemus, the physician, who was unskillful at solving riddles, is not unaptly rebuked by Æsop, for holding such occupation to be suitable only for girls when engaged in knitting girdles and hoods, but not for intelligent men. Altheus, also, in his work (pp. 453-459), cites large extracts from the book of Clearchus on riddles, and adds, "that the unraveling of such riddles is very similar to the pursuit of philosophy, and that therefore their solution, as a sign of wisdom, is held in favor, and deemed an appropriate mode of entertainment at table." We, however, pass by these examples from Clearchus, not only because they were already brought to the notice of expositors by Bochart, but especially because in the case of Samson's riddle the real stake at issue is higher than a garland for the winner, or the drinking of a forfeit-cup<sup>2</sup> by the loser. It evokes a stern conflict.

Then I will give you thirty garments (כִּרְיִיִּים).

and thirty changes of raiment (חֲלִילֹת בְּגָדִים). With this explanation, the more recent expositors would probably agree. By a "change" of raiment we are to understand a dress of state — a

Sunday suit, as we would say — for which the every-day dress may be exchanged on festive occasions. The Targum, however, has another explanation, which deserves to be mentioned. Like the Septuagint and Josephus, it translates חֲלִילֹת (changes) by אֲשֵׁרִיִּית, σφόλη; assuming thereby

for חֲלִי, a signification which indeed it sometimes seems to have, namely, to fight, to wound (Sept. πατάσσειν, τιτρώσκειν). For σφόλη is the classical term for a soldier's dress. In like manner, it

translates כִּרְיִיִּים by פְּלֻדֹסִים, i. e. balteus, the girdle or belt which the soldier buckled around his body (cf. 2 K. v. 23). — It was thus no small price that was put upon the solution of the riddle. But in other cases also it was probably not unusual for large sums to be staked. Thus, if we are to believe Dios, quoted by Josephus (*Antiq.* viii. 5, 3; cf. Jablonski, *Pantheon Egypt.*, Proleg., p. cxiv), Solomon and Hiram lost a great deal of money to each other. Plutarch relates how that the Ethiopian king staked many cities and villages on a riddle propounded to Anaxis, and would have won them, had not the philosophical Bias come to the aid of the Egyptian monarch. It was in consequence of solving a riddle that the legendary Persian hero was permitted to marry Rudabe, the mother of Rustem. According to ancient Scandinavian law, criminals could save themselves from death by means of a riddle (Olin Dalin, *Gesch. Schwedens*, German, i. 155). The same idea occurs in German riddle-books (Simrock, *Räthselbuch*, p. 463; Menzel, *d. Dichtung*, i. 427). — King Heidrik in Ridgotland had a severe war with Gester Blinde, king in Gothland. Finally, he challenged him to solve riddles. The latter in voked Odin, and conquered (Olin Dalin, i. 186).

Ver. 14. Out of the consumer came material for consumption, and out of the terrible came sweetness. The translator must take care not to destroy the ambiguity of the term אִכָּל, consumer. For this reason, the rendering of De Wette and Arnheim, "vom Fresser kommt Frass" [from the feeder comes feed], is not good; for, on the one hand, Frass [feed, a term used only for the food of beasts]<sup>3</sup> is not applicable to the honey which is meant, and on the other hand, human beings (do not feed, but) eat. Ewald's rendering, "aus dem Esser kam ein Essen" [out of the eater came an eating, i. e. something eatable], is unsuitable, because the lion, who is meant, is not an Esser, eater, nor yet as Bertheau renders, a Speiser [both terms being used of human beings only]. Equally erroneous is it to translate אִכָּל by "sour." For the

antithesis between this word and מְרוֹק is here to be taken in a wider sense, so as to give rise to a second *equivoque*: for מְרוֹק means not only "sweet," but metaphorically also "pleasant," agreeable. The ingenuity of the riddle consists precisely in this, that the ambiguity both of its language and contents can be turned in every direction, and thus conceals the answer. It is like a knot whose right end cannot be found, — a figure

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Plutarch, on the doctrine of the *Timæus* concerning the origin of souls.

<sup>2</sup> That is, a cup of unmixed wine, or of wine mixed with salt-water, to be emptied at one draught. See Smith's *Dict. Antiq.*, s. v. "Symposium." It will be remembered that the Greeks always mingled water with their wine. They considered it not only unhealthy, but hazardous, to

drink clear wine, which may suggest an explanation of the above-mentioned penalty. — Tr.]

<sup>3</sup> [In German, the act of eating on the part of beasts is called *fressen*; on the part of human beings, *essen* or *speisen*. The nearest approach we have to this distinction in English is between *feeding* and *eating*. — Tr.]

from which the sense of the Hebrew **רִמְזָה**, to propose a riddle, as also that of the Greek **γρίφος** (cf. **γρίπος**, the braided fishing-net), is doubtless to be derived. The Gordian knot was likewise an emblematical riddle. Samson's problem distinguishes itself only by its peculiar ingenuity. It is short and simple, and its words are used in their natural signification (**לֶחֶם** is to consume, in general, without regard to the specific form or nature of the consumption, and **יָצַק** is terrible, as "the strong one," whether in a good or evil sense, always is). It is so clear as to be obscure. It is not properly liable to the objection, that it refers to an historical act which no one could know. The act is one which was natural in that country. Its turning-point, with reference to the riddle, was, not that it was an incident of Samson's personal history, but that its occurrence in general was not impossible. The ingenuity of the riddle shows itself further in that it applies equally well both to an historical occurrence and a mere abstract conception. This was a characteristic of ancient popular riddles in general, and indicates their origin. Just as it was an art to represent historical facts symbolically by pictures (of which the modern rebus is an insipid

distortion), so it was an art out of such abstractions to disinter an historical fact. Most popular riddles call for the exercise of this art. The instance showing most likeness to the riddle proposed by Samson, is found in a story current in North Germany, and communicated by Müllenhoff (*Sagen*, p. 504): A man was condemned to death. His wife intercedes for him. The judges offer to let him go, if she can propose a riddle which they shall not be able to solve. The woman says: —

"*As ik hin gung, as ik wedder kam,  
Den Lebendigen ik uet den Doden nam.  
Siiss (Sechs) de giingen de Saewten (den Siebenten) quitt,  
Raet to, gy Herren, nu ist Tyl.*"<sup>1</sup>

The woman had found the carcass of a horse by the way, and in it a bird's-nest, and in the nest six young birds. The six young ones she took with her, whereby these became quit of the seventh; and thus she had taken the living out of the dead. It went with the wise judges even as it did with the proud Philistines — they guessed nothing.

<sup>1</sup> ["As I came along, I took the living out of the dead; six got quit of the seventh; guess away, my masters, now is the time." — *Tr.*]

*The Philistines solve the riddle by means of treachery. Samson's anger and payment of the forfeit.*

#### CHAPTER XIV. 15-20.

- 15 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said<sup>1</sup> unto Samson's wife, Eutice [Persuade] thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire: have ye called [invited] us to take that we  
16 have [plunder us]? *is it not so?* And Samson's wife wept before him and said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a [the] riddle unto the children [sons] of my people, and hast not told it me. And he said unto her,  
17 Behold, I have not told *it* my father nor my mother, and shall I tell *it* thee? And she wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted [during which they had their feast]: and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him [pressed him hard]: and she told the riddle to the children [sons]  
18 of her people. And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day before the sun went down, What *is* sweeter than honey? and what *is* stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, If ye had not ploughed with my heifer, ye had not  
19 found out my riddle. And the Spirit of the Lord [Jehovah] came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil [attire], and gave [the] change [changes] of garments unto them which expounded  
20 the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house. But [And] Samson's wife was *given* to his companion, whom he had used as his friend [who had attended him].

#### TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 15. — **וַיִּשְׁמְרוּ**. Dr. Cassel treats all that comes after the phrase, "and it came to pass on the seventh day," down to the same phrase in ver. 17, as parenthetic, and consequently renders **וַיִּשְׁמְרוּ** by the pluperfect: 'and they had said.' Cf. below. — *Tr.*]

#### EXOGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

The æsthetic beauty and psychological truth which characterize the narrative notwithstanding

its compressed brevity, and which would be incomparable even though the narrative were not found in the Bible, and had not divine truth for its contents and object, can scarcely be adequately pointed

ant, so manifestly do they manifest themselves. The drama is represented with such historical life-likeness, and its development is so natural, that while no one could foresee why the wedding should give rise to a conflict, yet in the sequel it becomes manifest that its occurrence was unavoidable. Samson really loved the maiden of Timnah, and took the full measure of youthful delight in the nuptial banquet and festival; but it is impossible for an Israelite, as he is, to enter into any kind of close connection with the enemies and oppressors of his people, without getting into a conflict. It must never be supposed that covenants, even in the simplest relations of life, can be made with those who are opponents in principle and tyrants in disposition. No occasion is so slight, but it suffices to inflame the fires of antagonism. Samson is too genial of nature to be a far-seeing party man; but he deceived himself when he expected to find a covenant of love and fidelity in a Philistine family. The preventing cause lay not only in his opponents, but also in himself, in that he was always, even unconsciously, showing who he was. Everything appeared to be harmonious when he propounded the riddle. He did it in the most peaceful spirit, from the impulse of an active mind. But it immediately brought the hidden antagonism to light. For they to whom it was proposed for solution were Philistines. As such, they would at all events be put to shame, if they failed to solve it. At the same time, it is true, the nobility of Samson's disposition reveals itself, in contrast with the vulgar natures of the Philistines. He, for his part, risks thirty times the value of what, in case of failure, each of the thirty has to pay. This is the very reason why, in their covetousness, they accept the wager. The result was natural. They cannot solve the riddle, but neither are they willing to admit this. They are too vain to be humbled by an alien, but especially too covetous to endure a loss. They therefore turn to Samson's young wife. Had she not been a Philistine, they would not have dared to do this. But, as it is, they expect to find in her an ally against the Israelite, even though he be her husband. She seems indeed to have resisted for a while,—until they arouse both her fears and her vanity. Her fears, by the threat to burn her father's house over her head; her vanity, by hinting that probably the riddle was only put forth in order to plunder the guests. The latter suspicion she may have found especially intolerable, women being ever peculiarly sensitive to similar surmises of village slander-mongers. Perhaps, however, she merely invented these threatening speeches afterwards, in order to pacify Samson. For else, why did she not confess the truth to Samson? That alone would have ended the trouble. Either he would have felt himself strong enough to protect her, and to humble the miserable enemies, or he would have consented to the sacrifice of appearing to be vanquished. But she did not do this, just because she did not forget that she was a Philistine. Samson, she conjectured, would not allow himself to be humbled. She sought, therefore, to persuade him by means of that very antagonism for the sake of which she betrayed him. She complained, weeping, that he still treated her like her countrymen, and also kept from her that which he would not tell them. She desires to make it appear that her love has so entirely brought her over to his interests, that she ought not to be put on the same footing with her countrymen. This would have been the right relation. The wife may assist no party but that of

her husband. But she only dissembled, in order to betray. Finally, on the seventh day,—the sun was already declining,—she had so tormented the hero, that he told it to her. He had a heart not only great, but also tender, which at last succumbs to the prayers and tears of the wife whom he loves and holds to be true. The treachery is completed. The miserable Philistines act as if they had themselves found the solution, and claim the reward. Then a light goes up for Samson. He sees the whole contrast,—the incongruity and error of a covenant with Philistines. Before the treason of which he has been made the subject, the mists with which a seductive sensuality had obscured his vision are scattered. National wrath and national strength awake within him. His whole greatness reveals itself. He does not refuse the Philistines the promised reward. But the manner in which it is given, is full of contempt and humiliation. He throws to them the spoils of thirty slain Philistines. He leaves the woman, and returns to Israel. The conflict has begun, and Samson's true calling becomes manifest. He who wears the consecration of God on his head, cannot revel in the houses of Philistines.

Ver. 15. **And it came to pass on the seventh day.** More recent expositors have made no remarks on this difficult statement. To assume that the Philistines first applied themselves to the woman on the seventh day, is rendered impossible by ver. 17, which says that she wept before Samson "seven days." The LXX. therefore, read here, "on the fourth day," because ver. 14 states that for three days they were not able to find the solution. Considering how easily 7 and 4 may be interchanged, the substitution of "seven" for "four" appears very likely. But the clearer it seems that the reading should be, "on the fourth day," the more surprising it is that the Masora retained "on the seventh day." The Masora, however, supposed the Sabbath to be meant by the seventh day,—an opinion also followed by some of the older expositors (cf. Serarius), but which cannot be correct.<sup>1</sup> For in ver. 17 a "seventh day" is again mentioned, which cannot, however, be another Sabbath; for as the first "seventh day" is, by the supposition, the fourth, so this second is the seventh, day of the wedding-feast. The reading "on the seventh day" can be retained, if the passage which begins immediately after it in ver. 15, and extends to the same phrase in ver. 17, be regarded as a sort of parenthesis. The writer was already on the point of stating that after they had ineffectually puzzled over it for three days, Samson on the seventh day told it to his wife, when it occurred to him first to interpose the statements of vers. 15-17, as showing the motives by which Samson was influenced. Accordingly, "on the seventh day," in ver. 17, only continues what the same words in ver. 15 had begun. The statement in the parenthesis that she wept before him "seven days," falls in with this view. The idea is, that from the time at which she began, she continued to torment him throughout the whole seven-day period of the feast. Throughout the whole week, therefore, instead of cheerful guests, Samson had sullen Philistine faces, and, instead of a happy wife, crocodile tears and reproaches.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Least correct of all would it be, with Lillenthal, to leave the words out because the Königsberg MSS. did not have them.

<sup>2</sup> [Dr. Cassel's explanation of this matter does not strike me favorably. It certainly fails to justify the remark of

**Persuade thy husband, that he declare unto us the riddle.** פְּנִי, persuade; most frequently, it is true, "befool," "entice by flattery." Very significant is the expression, "that he declare unto us the riddle." If he tells it to her, they intimate, he will have told it to them. For do not they and she constitute an "us?" She belongs to them, and must act accordingly, if she would not incur their enmity against herself and her house.

**Have ye invited us to plunder us? is it not so?** הֲלִיָּרְשָׁנִי is the kal infinitive with suffix,

and is to be derived from יָרַשׁ, to inherit, to get by conquest, to take into possession. The word is aptly chosen here. When Israel was taking possession of the land, יָרַשׁ was a word in constant use. The Philistines mockingly ask whether they were invited that Israel, in the person of Samson, might "conquer," "inherit," their property. הֲלִיָּא, at the close, is an interrogative particle, like the Latin *ne*, used enclitically.

**Ver. 16. Thou dost but hate me,** שִׂנְאָתִי. Samson, she intimates, must look on her as one looks on a person who belongs to a hostile tribe, seeing that he conceals the solution of the riddle from her as well as from the other people of the city. The woman, pressed to decide between her people and Samson, inclines to the Philistines. A lesson for Samson and others like him.

**Behold, I have not told it my father nor my mother.** It is true, he deferred not to father and mother in the matter of his marriage, but not from want of reverence for them. They are his most beloved. To them he brings of the honey. (Very insipidly, Josephus adds here that he brought honey to the woman also.) And the woman, in the midst of her flatteries and tears, must endure to hear him say to her: Have I not told it to my parents, and shall I tell it to thee? To be sure, it would have been inexcusable to have put his parents — and such parents! — on the same level with a Philistine woman.

**Ver. 18. Before the sun went down.** Here also we have the poetical name הַרְפָּה (instead of the form הָרָם), for the sun, cf. on ch. viii. 13.

Beautiful is the expression בּוֹא, to come, for "to set." The sun comes home, as it were — comes into his house, like a bridegroom after his wedding. On the other hand, when the sun rises, the Hebrew says that he "goes forth" into activity, forth for victory like a hero.

**Had ye not ploughed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle.** The answer of the angry Samson is elegantly conched in the form of a proverb, full of spirit, as are all his sayings which have been preserved. It starts from the experience that buried treasures come to light,

**ver. 17:** "she wept before him seven days." The natural explanation seems to be this: As soon as the riddle was given, the young wife at once began to tease for its solution. Refusal both stimulated her curiosity and wounded her vanity, so that even before the end of the first day she had recourse to the argument of tears. Day by day she renewed the assault, but always ineffectually. Finally, on the seventh day she brings a new argument, furnished her by the guests. For the first three days of the festivities these had sought to solve the riddle in a legitimate way. Such appears to be the import of the remark in ver. 14: "and they could not in three days expound the riddle." What they did on the next three days is not stated. They

when the soil is turned by the plough. (Tages, the Roman Genius, was fabled to have been thus ploughed up.) But not every one knows where to draw the furrow. The Philistines would not have known it; but his heifer had shown them the way. The comparison is not very flattering to the traitress, but quite appropriate. For no merit accrues to the heifer when it ploughs the right furrow: it has been shown to it. So also the woman: she has solved nothing, but only played the traitor.

**Ver. 19. And he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them.** Why to Ashkelon? Against the people of Timnah he could not turn his wrath. He had eaten with them, and he would not withdraw himself from the obligations he had assumed. But their conduct had awakened him to a sense of the great national contrast between them and Israel. At this moment he felt that Israel lay in the hands of servitude. Between his people and the Philistines no other treaty existed, than that which is made by the cowardly and the God-forsaken with their enemies. Israel endured servitude, because it had fallen away from its ancient spirit. It ventured no longer on resistance.

All this came home to Samson's mind at this moment. He determined to give a proof of Israelitish strength. Hence we read, "the Spirit of Jehovah came upon him," a remark always found where Israel manifests a determination to lift up heart and hand against the enemies of God. His relations would have advised him to collect money and buy the garments. It was a divine inspiration which moved him to pay by battle. Why did he go to Ashkelon? Because there were rich and valiant men there, whom it was worth while to attack and overcome. Probably it was a nuptial party, graced, as his own had been, with thirty attendant groom's-men, that he surprised. It was not done in the midst of peace. There was no peace between Philistines and Israel. He conquered the thirty Philistines (members, perhaps, as we have said, of a nuptial train) with the sword, as he vanquished his own retinue in a conflict of intellect. The fame of the wonderful young Israelite resounds through the land. No reprisals are made. The princes of the Philistines look on the occurrence as a private affair. But a silent quaking of conscience, such as seizes on tyrants when a fresh spirit stirs itself among the oppressed, contributed no doubt to the preservation of repose.

**Took their attire,** חֲלִיצוֹתָם. *Chalitsah* (חֲלִיצָה) is the military equipment, of which the fallen are stripped, cf. 2 Sam. ii. 21. There, the Sept. renders it *πανοπλία*; here, *στέλα*. This supports the opinion of the Targum, adduced above, that the promise of Samson referred to military garments. For the *chalipheth* (changes of garments) which he paid, were doubtless part of the *chalitsah*, or military suits, which he took; so that Samson

may have remained inactive, trusting in some way to compass the solution at last, or they may have been already ploughing with Samson's heifer. But if the latter, they had not yet recourse to threats. On the last day of the feast, however, when they find that waiting has been as ineffective as working, and that the wife's importunities (of which they were probably cognizant, even though they did not stimulate them), have likewise accomplished nothing, they resort to threats against the wife. The latter thereupon becomes more urgent and tearful than ever, and gains her point. Compare Bertheau and Kail, who give essentially the same explanation. — Ta.]

did not first sell his hooty, and then buy new garments. It is in harmony with the dramatic course of the action, that Samson flung to his treacherous friends, as the price of their deception, garments snatched from their own countrymen.

And he went up to his father's house. His wrath blazed up into a national flame against the Philistine brood. He turns his back upon them, and goes home. It seems to be his intention never to come back. How little they were worthy of him, is shown by the conduct of the woman, after his departure. That she may not be without a husband in consequence of her treason, she is rewarded with the hand of another man. One of the companions for whose sake she deceived Samson, marries her. To treason she adds infidelity. Meanness of disposition gives birth to everything that is bad. It can neither love nor be faithful; but least of all can it comprehend a man such as Samson was.

A survey of only that which chapter xiv. shows of Samson, should have excited the attention of those who find pleasure in comparing him with Hercules. While all the ancient statements about the Greek hero have value only as the vehicles of mythico-symbolical ideas, Samson appears in the midst of history, wearing the living hues of actual existence. Hercules, the more the later Greeks take him historically, the more he assumes the character of a coarse giant and glutton, who, averse to culture, kills his master; while Samson is at once portrayed as a genial man, of noble disposition. It were more feasible to institute a comparison between Samson and many traits in the character of Ulysses, were it not that in the latter, as in Greek heroes generally, there is wanting the pathos of the national champion, and that elevation of spirit which, in the case of Samson, breaks through the fetters of even his deepest sensuality. It is already a misapprehension when some would assign twelve exploits to Samson, seeing that his whole life is given for a testimony; but when his slaying of the thirty Philistines is counted as the

second (as *e. g.* by Bertheau), there is a want of understanding even of the Heraclean performances. These are a didactic poem; what is told of Samson, signifies an ethical deed. The deeds of Hercules have no mutual connection: those of Samson, ethico-historical in their nature, are conditioned one by the other. The succeeding history, related in chap. xv., connects itself with what has gone before.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

[HENRY (on vers. 10, 12): It is no part of religion to go contrary to the innocent usages of the places where we live; nay, it is a reproach to religion, when those who profess it give just occasion to others to call them covetous, sneaking, and morose. A good man should strive to make himself, in the best sense, a good companion. — THE SAME: "If ye had not ploughed with my heifer, you had not found out my riddle." Satan, in his temptations, could not do us the mischief he does, if he did not plough with the heifer of our own corrupt nature. — THE SAME: "And he went up to his father's house." It were well for us, if the unkindness we meet with from the world, and our disappointments in it, had but this good effect upon us to oblige us by faith and prayer to return to our heavenly Father's house, and rest there. — THE SAME: "Samson's wife was given to his companion, whom he had used as his friend." See how little confidence is to be put in man, when those may prove our enemies whom we have used as our friends. — BP. HALL (on ver. 19): If we wonder to see thirty throats cut for their suits, we may easily know that this was but the occasion of that slaughter whereof the cause was their oppression and tyranny.

WORDSWORTH: At the marriage feast of Cana in Galilee, Christ manifested forth his glory (John ii. 11). But at this marriage in Timnath, Samson betrayed the first signs of moral weakness and degeneracy. — TR.]

*Samson returns to visit his wife. Finding that she has been given to another, he avenges himself on the Philistines by firing their standing corn.*

#### CHAPTER XV. 1-8.

- 1 But [And] it came to pass within a while after [after a while], in the time of wheat-harvest, that Samson visited his wife with a kid; and he said, I will go in to my wife into the chamber [the female apartment]. But her father would not suffer
- 2 him to go in. And her father said, I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her; therefore I gave her to thy companion: is not her younger sister fairer than
- 3 she? take her [be she thine], I pray thee, instead of her. And Samson said concerning [to] them, Now shall I be more [omit: more] blameless than [before] the
- 4 Philistines, though I do them a displeasure [do them evil]. And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes [jackals], and took fire-brands [torches], and turned
- 5 tail to tail, and put a fire-brand [torch] in the midst between two tails. And when he had set the brands [torches] on fire, he let them go [sent them off — *i. e.*, the animals] into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives [with the olive-gardens]
- 6 Then the Philistines said, Who hath done this? And they answered, Samson, the

son-in law of the Timnite, because he had taken [took] his wife, and given [gave] her to his companion. And the Philistines came up, and burnt her and her father 7 with fire. And Samson said unto them, Though ye have done this [If ye act thus], 8 yet will I [(I swear) that I will] be avenged of you, and after that I will cease. And he smote them hip [shauk] and thigh with a great slaughter. And he went down and dwelt in the top [cleft] of the rock Etam.

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Vers. 1, 2. And it came to pass after some time. Samson's disposition was too noble to cherish anger long; only small souls bear grudges. But great natures measure others by themselves. Because they have forgotten the wrong that was done them, they think that others are no longer mindful of the wrong they have done. Samson feels as if nothing had happened. Kindly-disposed as ever, he comes to visit his wife. His conciliatory feeling declares itself in the present of a kid which he brings. His wife, it says, has nothing to fear. Conscious of harmless intentions, he wishes to

enter her room (נִדְּוָה is for the most part the inner apartment, where the women sleep). But this leads to the disclosure of how he has been treated. Her father does not allow him to enter, on the ground that she is no longer his wife, but another's. The injustice of the transaction thus disclosed was patent. For Samson's absence cannot have been long. He returned in the season of the wheat-harvest (mentioned on account of ver. 5), which fell perhaps in May. It is probable that in Palestine, as elsewhere, most weddings took place in the spring. Samson, at his departure, had not said that he would not return. His father-in-law excuses himself only by intimating that he thought he would not come back. The words of ver. 2 enable us almost to see the anxiety and fear with which the father seeks to exculpate himself before Samson, — whom he now knows better than formerly, — and under the influence of which he offers him his other daughter as indemnification. He cannot restore his wife for fear of the Philistines; and he fears him because of the injustice he has done him.

Ver. 3. And Samson said to them: This time I shall be blameless, etc. The greatness of his nature shows itself here also. To the fearful father he does no harm. Small heroism there would have been in that. He uses no violence — brings the man into no awkward relations with his countrymen. He remembers that his daughter has been his wife, love of whom has brought him there. Besides — and this again manifests the warrior of God in him — he speedily sinks all personal interests in the general interests of his people. At every conflict the consciousness of his divine vocation breaks forth. He turns his personal wrong into an occasion of a national exploit against the enemy of his people as a whole. The sign of consecration is upon his head in order to lead him on from small things to great, from things personal to those that are general, from objects of sense to things of the spirit, and to remind him of his call to be a hero for Israel against the Philistines.

1 It may be mentioned as an exegetical curiosity that earlier interpreters sought to explain the word *shualim* of *snips of straw*. Cf. Stark, *Observ. Select.* (Lips. 1714) p. 127.

2 A great deal of debate was formerly had on the question of the greater or less difficulty involved in the capture

He said to them. To whom? To his own people — to his own family. Israel was utterly dispirited. The people did not feel deeply enough the disgrace in which they lived. Special grounds were wanting, in their view, to justify Samson's hostility against the Philistines. The Philistines were not harming them; why then attack them? Probably Samson's former exploit had been disapproved. He himself, they may have told him, had been to blame in the riddle-matter. None more law-abiding and careful than a slavish people that will make no sacrifices. Now, says Samson to them, have you still nothing to say? I have a cause; I have been undeniably wronged. It was the Philistines who forced my wife and her father to take the step they took. They did it because I am an Israelite. For what I now do against them I am not to be blamed. He thus takes advantage of the letter of personal rights in behalf of the spirit of general freedom. Since his people are insensible of their bondage, he makes his private affair the basis of a declaration of war.

Ver. 4. And he caught three hundred *shualim* (jackals, foxes). Samson found himself alone in his hostility against the Philistines. No one of his father's house followed him. He had not even three hundred men, like those that stood by Gideon. He turns, therefore, to the beasts of the forest for confederates. As bears come to the help of Elisha, so he, instead of three hundred soldiers, procures three hundred jackals,<sup>1</sup> and constitutes them his army against the national foe. It was an ancient and common war measure, still employed by the hostile tribes of the East, to set fire to the standing grain. The Lydian king Alyattes used this terrible means for twelve successive years against the Milesians (Herod. i. 17–19). It was the most telling damage that Samson could inflict on the Philistines. They had not stirred when he slew the thirty men. The living received no injury from that. But when the harvest disappears in flames, the calamity is felt far and wide. For this reason, Samson could not execute his work alone. The fire would have been more quickly perceived and more readily quenched; for he could begin only in one spot. He chose this measure, not only to show his strength and his warlike humor, but also to let the enemy see how much he was to be feared, albeit he stood alone. True it is, undoubtedly, that no other man would have found it an easy matter thus to catch and use three hundred jackals.<sup>2</sup> But what a fearful, running,<sup>3</sup> and illimitable conflagration arose, when the three hundred animals, almost crazed by the burning torches that wrapped their tails in fire, sped through the standing grain to seek deliverance and freedom for themselves and — so to speak — for Samson. The fire not only spread of itself, but was carried

of the jackals. It was finally concluded that a good pair of mittens had rendered useful service. Oedmann, *Verm. Samml.*, ii. 32.

3 The Greek name of the jackal, *θώς*, is derived from *θόος*, nimble, swift, since they run very fast, faster than wolves Benfey holds a different opinion (*Gram.* ii. 276).

by the pain-maddened animals ever deeper into the possessions of the Philistines. Three hundred burning torches ran, with the swiftness of the wind, in the dry season, through the waving fields, past the shocks, and up the mountain vine-yards,<sup>1</sup> with which at all times the fox is too well acquainted for the interests of the owner. In this blow Samson, ever ingenious, translated a widely diffused popular figure into terrible reality. The

word נִשְׂרָף is the general term for that class of animals of which the *canis aureus*, *alopek*, and *canis vulpes* are the species. It is thought that we must here think of the *canis aureus*, the jackal, inasmuch as this animal is found in those regions in large troops. All we can be certain of, is, that a member of the red fox family is intended, whose tail itself looks like a red burning torch or glowing coal.<sup>2</sup> For Grimm's remark (made in the year 1812, *d. Museum*, p. 393), that in the narrative of Reynard "the tail and its red color are indispensable," is indeed true. "The witnesses of foxes are their tails," is an old Arabic proverb (Diez, *Denkwürd. v. Asien*, ii. 88). The Greeks, for this reason, called the fox λαμπρὸς, bright, burning tail. Expositors have frequently directed attention to the statements of Ovid (*Fast.* iv. 681) concerning an ancient Roman custom, practiced in Carseoli, at the festival of the Cerealia, of letting go foxes, with burning torches tied to them, by means of which they were consumed. The idea of the ceremony was undoubtedly to present the fox, who, according to the story, once set the grain-fields on fire, as a propitiatory offering to ward off mildew,<sup>3</sup> of which he is a type. The mildew is called *robigo*<sup>4</sup> in Latin, Greek ῥυσθῆ; both to be derived from the reddish color of the affection (Preller, *Röm. Myth.* p. 437). This is confirmed by the fact that λαμπρὸς was also the name for the glow-worm. The Boeotians were not the only ones who, as Suidas mentions (cf. Bochart, lib. iii. xxii.), believed that fire could be kindled with the glow-worm; in Germany also tradition related that glow-worms carried coals into buildings (Wolf, *Deutsche Mythologie*, i. 233), just as by a similar figure the phrase, "to set the red cock on the roof" (*den rothen Hahn auf's Dach setzen*), was used to denote incendiarism.

It was a fearful reality into which the idea of the incendiary fox was converted by Samson.<sup>5</sup> The Philistines were terrified.

Ver. 6. And the Philistines said, Who hath done this? They are informed of the author and the occasion of his wrath. They determine to avenge themselves, but choose a mode as cowardly as it was unjust. As in the former instance they left Samson's deed unpunished, so now they will have nothing to do with him. It would be impossible to show more delicately how tyrannous power becomes conciliatory and circumspect towards de-

pendents, as soon as a man of spirit appears among them. Instead of risking anything against him, they commit an outrage on the weak in order to pacify him. They fall upon the family of the wife of Samson, and burn father and daughter in their house. It was a sad fate. It was to avert the very same danger that the woman had betrayed Samson. It was on account of the Philistines that she was separated from him. And now these execute the cruel deed in order to pacify Samson's hostility. Such is the curse of treason. But the instruments of this fate were still more guilty than its victims. For did they not know that it was against themselves that Samson had directed his national vengeance? Had he been desirous of personal vengeance on his wife's family, could he not have inflicted it himself as well as they? If they intended to punish the recreant family for having deprived Samson of his wife, they certainly could not expect thereby to inflict pain on Samson? What a difference between them and him! The injured hero turns his vengeance against the powerful; and these take satisfaction on the weak. He elevates a personal conflict into a national challenge, which they lower into vengeance on individuals. He spares the house of the Timnite, although Philistines: they murder it, from cowardly circumspection, although it is the house of a countryman. He burns their fields in order to rouse them to battle, and they burn their brethren in order to pacify the enemy.

Ver. 7. And Samson said to them, If ye act thus. This cruel cowardice awakens Samson's utmost contempt and resentment. They seek to conciliate, but only provoke. They judge the hero by themselves when they think to have quieted him by such an abomination; and he smites them according to their deserts. The loss which he had suffered was not great; but what the Philistines do, becomes to them, through his action, a source of misery. The words, "if ye act thus," express the full measure of his contempt. In ver. 3 he only spoke of "doing them evil" (damage); but now he says, I will not cease until "I have taken satisfaction on yourselves" (נָפַקְם). The cowardly Philistines afforded him an occasion for wrath and victory such as he had not hitherto possessed. For he must take advantage of such opportunities, on account of the torpor of his own people. He must estimate the loss of a faithless wife and a characterless Philistine father-in-law sufficiently high, in order to give free course to the national wrath against the pusillanimous foe.

Ver. 8. And he smote them, shank and thigh, with a great slaughter. What Philistines he smote is not stated; but it is to be supposed that he surprised those who burned the Timnite. These he attacked, man by man; and inflicted a "great defeat." For the words נִפְקָה גְדוֹלָה are explan-

<sup>1</sup> [Dr. Cassel renders נִשְׂרָף זֵית (ver. 5) by "vine-yards." It is difficult to account for this, except upon the supposition of inadvertence. נִשְׂרָף is in the construct state, and is used here in its general sense of garden, plantation. — Tr.]

<sup>2</sup> It is worthy of remark that the Persian for jackal (*shaqhal*) occurs also with the sense of *carbo* and *pruna*, glowing coal (cf. Vullers, *Pers. Lex.*, ii. 433, 438), and that the Old High German *chola*, a coal, seems to be the same word. Hence the terms *Brandfuchs*, *Kohlenfuchs*, renard charbonnier, volpe carbonaja.

<sup>3</sup> [The German word is *kornbrand*, "corn-burn." — Tr.]

<sup>4</sup> From *rufus*. Cognate names for the fox are found in

various dialects: Spanish, *raposo*; Portuguese, *raposo*, Danish, *ræv*; Swedish, *raf*; in the Finnish tongues, *repe*, *rebbane* (cf. Pott, *Etym. Forsch.*, i. lxxxii.).

<sup>6</sup> Speaking of Hannibal's stratagem of fastening fire-brands to the horns of two thousand cattle, Livy (xxii. 17) says: "*Haud secus, quam silvis montibusque acensis, omnia circum virgulta ardere.*" — The instance of the burning fox-tails from Roman customs, is remarkably paralleled by a Persian superstition. Whenever from want of rain the grain threatened to burn up, it was the practice to fasten combustible materials to the tail of a young bullock, and set them on fire. If the bullock thus treated ran over a hill, it was regarded a favorable sign. Cf. Richardson *Abhandlungen über Sprachen etc. morgenländischer Völker* p. 236.



atory of the proverbial expression שֹׁן עַל-יָדָהּ, "shank and thigh." In the שֹׁן — the word is manifestly the same as the German *Schinke*, *Schenkel*, English, "shank" — the Hebrew saw a sensible representation of the strength of the body. "God," says the Psalmist (Ps. cxlviii. 10), "takes

no pleasure in the שֹׁן of a man." When oriental narrators wish to indicate a close battle-array, they say: "shank stood on shank" (cf. *Diez, Denkw. von Asien*, i. 133). Both Romans and Greeks employed forms of expression which imply that to break a person's loin, hip, and shank to pieces is equivalent to hewing him down completely (cf. *infringere lumbos, percutere finem, ὑψους πατάσσειν*). The shank is underneath the thigh. The proverbial phrase is therefore equivalent to: "he smote them upper leg and lower leg," i. e. completely; and the completeness of the defeat is yet more vividly expressed in that the writer says, שֹׁן עַל-יָדָהּ (literally, "shank upon thigh"),

whereas the natural order is יָדָהּ עַל-שֹׁן ("thigh upon shank"). He turned them upside down, and cut them to pieces. Bertheau's endeavor to explain the words by the Arabic expression, "he smote them shank-fashion," is not satisfactory, since this phrase seems rather to denote a man to man conflict. The explanation, "horseman and footman," given by the Targum, is worthy of notice, by reason of the knowledge of oriental languages which its authors may be supposed to have had. Marvelous are the explanations of many of the church fathers and elder expositors (cf. Serarius, *in loc.*). The LXX. translate verbally: *κνήμη ἐπὶ μηρὸν*; but only *κνήμη καὶ μηρὸς* is found in Greek authors (Plato, *Timæus*, 74 e).

And he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock Etam. After such a deed he deemed himself no longer safe in Zorah and its vicinity. He looked now for a determined attack from the enemy, and sought therefore a secure place for defense and refuge. He found it in a "cleft of the rock Etam." Opinions differ widely as to the position of this locality. Bertheau finds it in an Etam near Bethlehem (the Urtas of Robinson, *Bibl. Res.* i. 477), which seems to be too far east, while Keil looks for it too far south, in the vicinity of Khuweilifeh. Samson cannot have intended to withdraw altogether from further conflicts, his declaration, "after that I will cease," notwithstanding; for this referred only to his recompense of the abominable deed at Timnah. Nor can he have removed to too great a distance from his

home. Etam is a name which, from its significance, might naturally be of frequent occurrence, and which is very suitable for the abode of the lion-slayer and jackal-conqueror. It signifies "wild-beasts' lair;" for עֵי is a ravenous beast. The name, which probably still answered to the reality, offered a guaranty for the sustenance of the hero who took up his dwelling there. From Deir Dubbân to Beit Jibrin (Eleutheropolis) there are found remarkable rock-caverns, which in later times became places of refuge for Christians, and which even in very ancient times doubtless served as asylums for warriors and wild beasts. Their position is such that for Samson it could not have been better (cf. Ritter, xvi. 136, etc.). In the name Deir Dubbân — *dub, dob*, is a bear — a reminiscence of that of Etam might still be found.<sup>1</sup>

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

[HENRY: "Visited her with a kid." The value of the present was inconsiderable, but it was intended as a token of a reconciliation. . . . It was generous in Samson, as the party offended, and the superior relation, to whom therefore she was bound to make the first motion of reconciliation. When differences happen between near relations, let those be ever reckoned the wisest and the best, that are most forward to forgive and forget injuries, and most willing to stoop and yield for peace sake. — THE SAME: "I verily thought thou hadst utterly hated her." It will never bear us out in doing ill, to say, We thought others designed ill. — THE SAME (on ver. 6): See His hand in it to whom vengeance belongs! Those that deal treacherously, shall be spoiled and dealt treacherously with, and the Lord is known by these judgments which He executes; especially when, as here, He makes use of his people's enemies as instruments for revenging his people's quarrels one upon another. — BR. HALL: If the wife of Samson had not feared the fire for herself and her father's house, she had not betrayed her husband. . . . That evil which the wicked feared, meets them in their flight. How many, in a fear of poverty, seek to gain unconscionably, and die beggars! How many, to shun pain and danger, have yielded to evil, and in the long run have been met in the teeth with that mischief which they had hoped to have left behind them! — TR.]

<sup>1</sup> Keil (on Josh. xii. 15) inclines to locate the Cave of Adullam at Deir Dubbân.

*The Philistines threaten war against Judah. The men of Judah, to save themselves, seek to deliver up Samson, who allows himself to be bound, but tears his bonds when brought in sight of the Philistines, and slays a thousand of the enemy.*

#### CHAPTER XV. 9-20.

9 Then the Philistines went up, and pitched in [encamped against] Judah, and  
10 spread themselves in Lehi. And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come up  
against us? And they answered, To bind [i. e., to capture] Samson are we come up, to  
11 do to him as he hath done to us. Then three thousand men of Judah went [down]



- to the top [cleft] of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines *are* [omit: *are*] rulers [rule] over us? what *is* this *that* thou hast done unto us? And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them. And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves. And they spake unto him, saying, No; but [for] we will bind thee fast [omit: fast], and deliver thee into their hand: but surely [omit: surely] we will not kill thee. And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock. And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against<sup>1</sup> him: and the Spirit of the Lord [Jehovah] came mightily [suddenly] upon him, and the cords that *were* upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed [melted] from off his hands. 15 And he found a new [fresh] jaw-bone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took 16 it, and slew a thousand men therewith. And Samson said,<sup>2</sup>

With the jaw-bone of an ass

A mass, yea masses:

With the jaw-bone of an ass

I slew a thousand men.

- 17 And it came to pass when he had made an end of speaking, that he cast away the jaw-bone out of his hand, and [people] called that place Ramath-lehi [Hill of the jaw-bone]. And he was sore athirst, and called on the Lord [Jehovah], and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into [by] the hand of thy servant: and now 19 shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised? But [And] God clave an hollow place [in the mortar] that *was* in the jaw [in Lehi],<sup>3</sup> and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, [and he drank, and] his spirit came again, and he revived. Wherefore he [men] called the name thereof En-hakkore [Well of him that called], which *is* in Lehi unto this day. And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.

#### TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 14. — לִפְנֵימֹתָיו: "towards," rather than "against." The idea is that when the Philistines saw Samson coming, they set up shouts of exultation which "met him," so to speak, as he approached. — Ta.]

[2 Ver. 16. — We place the amended rendering of this poetic utterance in the text, and for convenience' sake subjoin here that of the E. V.:—

With the jaw-bone of an ass,  
Heaps upon heaps;  
With the jaw of an ass  
Have I slain a thousand men.

The unusual form חֲמֹר = חֶמֶר (found elsewhere, if at all, only in 1 Sam. xvi. 20), is manifestly chosen for the sake of a pun. It means a "heap;" but in order to reproduce the paronomasia as nearly as possible, we have substituted the word "mass," as suggested by Dr. Wordsworth, *in loc.* According to Keil, the expression, "a heap, two heaps," intimates that the victory was accomplished, not in one combat, but in several. But as the *magnitude* of the victory is evidently celebrated, rather than the process of its accomplishment, the dual is better regarded as designed to amplify and heighten the idea of the preceding singular: "a heap — yes, a pair of heaps!" — Ta.]

[3 Ver. 19. — בַּלְחִי. The article occasions no difficulty, as it is frequently used with proper nouns, especially with names of places, rivers, etc.; see Ges. *Gram.* 109. 3. and especially Ewald, 277 c. Keil very properly observes, that if a tooth-socket in the ass's jaw-bone were intended, the expression would naturally be מַכְתֵּשׁ בַּלְחִי or מַכְתֵּשׁ בַּלְחִי.

rather than מַכְתֵּשׁ אֲשֵׁר בַּלְחִי. Wordsworth, speaking of the opinion that God clave the *rock*, objects "that the words are, 'God clave the mactesh,' which seems much more applicable to the mortar of the jaw than to a place in the rock." As if an ass had but one tooth to a jaw-bone! Bush is probably not far wrong when he suggests that "a fondness for multiplying miracles," may have had some influence over the renderings of "several of the ancient versions" at this place. — Ta.]

#### EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Vers. 9, 10. And the Philistines went up and encamped against Judah. Samson had foreseen that the Philistines would now seek vengeance on a larger scale, and had therefore provided himself with a place of security against both friend and foe. This time also, however, the enemy proceed not directly against him, but take the field against Israel. As on a former occasion, they seek satisfaction from those who were really innocent, and

who would gladly remain at peace. They announce that they have come to bind Samson, i. e., to make him powerless to injure them. It is no sign of forbearance that they do not say, "We will kill him;" on the contrary, it appears from ch. xvi. that they entertained still more cruel designs. It was easy for Judah to perceive how cowardly was the hatred they cherished against Samson, and thence to infer what heroic deeds of conquest the victor might yet achieve; but the great tribe, once so powerful in action, lay helpless in the deepest

decay. It would not be possible to portray the slavish disposition of a people that has departed from God more strikingly, than is here done by the conduct of Judah.

Ver. 11. Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock Etam. Judah never enjoyed such an opportunity to free itself from the yoke of the Philistines. It had a leader of incomparable strength and energy. The enemy had been smitten, and was apprehensive of further defeats. If it had risen now, and, ranged under Samson, undertaken a war of liberation in God's name, where was the station that the Philistines could have continued to hold? The heroic deeds of Joshua and Caleb would have been re-enacted. The power of the Philistines would have been broken, perhaps forever. But what did Judah? Terrified by the threatening advance of the Philistines, coming to seek Samson, it has not even courage to say, "Go, and bind him yourselves." Three thousand armed men are quickly got together, not to avail themselves of Samson's leadership against the enemy, but — alas! for the cowards — to act as the enemy's tools, pledged to deliver the nation's hero into their hands. The Philistines, with malicious cunning, probably demanded this as the price of peace. For either Samson refuses to follow the men of Judah, and smites them, which would be gain to the Philistines, or he is taken and brought by them, in which case they will have heaped disgrace on both, and filled them with wrath toward each other. And in fact the number of the men who proceed to Etam, shows that they feel obliged, if need be, to use violence.

And they said to Samson, Knowest thou not, etc. No lost battle presents so sad a picture as do these three thousand armed men, with their complaint against Samson that he has provoked the Philistines, and their question, Knowest thou not that they rule over us? It was so easy to say to him: Up, Samson! they come to bind thee; come thou to free us from their bonds. But they cannot speak thus. Their heart is lost in idolatry. No one can raise himself to freedom, who has not first repented — for penitence is courage against self, and confession before others — and among the three thousand there are no three hundred who have not bowed to Baal. Samson's negotiation with them, although comprised in a few sentences, is worthy of admiration. After all, he had really fought only for them, and had attacked the oppressor of the nation. But he does not upbraid them with this.<sup>1</sup> Since they have not comprehended the fact that his own cause was the cause of the nation, he lays no stress on this, but shows them his personal right to engage in the war he had waged. The justification he sets up was such that they could not in honor turn against him. For he says: —

As they did unto me, so have I done unto them. Retaliation was a primitive oriental right, still sanctioned by the Koran.<sup>2</sup> To this right the Philistines had appealed in ver. 10: "We will do to Samson as he did to us." The men of Judah

1 Milton rightly makes Samson say: —

"I, on th' other side,  
Used no ambition to commend my deeds."

2 Sura, 5, 53, which refers to Ex. xxi. 24, where, however, the law intends to limit retaliation by determining its measure. Compare the narrative in Diez, *Denkwürdigkeiten Asiens*, ii. 179.

3 The following translation of vers. 15–17, from a German book published in 1705, at Halle, may serve as a specimen of the exegesis which sometimes passed current:

do not undertake to decide upon the right of either party. They desire nothing but peace — with the Philistines. They would submit to them at any price. Any admission of Samson's right would have obligated them to stand by him. The fact is they came to serve not as judges but as tools of the Philistines. Whosoever is weak enough to accept such a mission, will not be brought to thought and reason by any exposition of right. Idolatry is ever blindness. Reason had vanished from the tribe. How else could it surrender such a man, or hope for peace from the Philistines after the hero whom they feared was in their possession? How can such slaves — in recent times also such conduct as theirs has been called peace-loving — expect to remain at peace?

Vers. 12, 13. We are come to bind thee, said the three thousand to the one courageous man. And never does Samson show himself greater than when he voluntarily allows himself to be bound. Against his countrymen he is powerless. With the blood of Israel he must not and will not stain himself. He makes but one condition, and that the least possible. No Judæan hands must meditate his death. That condition alone would have sufficed to inform the men of Judah, had they been able to comprehend such heroism at all, that he consults only their feelings, because they are Israelites, but does not fear the Philistines.

Ver. 14. When he came unto Lehi, the shouts of the Philistines met him. What a spectacle! That cowardice can brazen hearts and faces until all sense of shame is lost, is shown by the memorable scene here depicted. Judah is not ashamed to drag its hero forward, bound with strong cords. It does not blush when the Philistines shout aloud at the spectacle. But this cowardly jubilation was soon to be turned into groans and flight. As the hero comes in sight of the enemy and hears their outcries, the Spirit of God comes upon him. His heart boils with indignation over the ignominy of his people. His strength kindles for resistless deeds. His cords fall off like tow seized by the fire. He is free, and his freedom is victory.

Vers. 15, 16. And he saw a fresh jaw-bone of an ass. The enemy is before him: therefore, forward! to battle! Any weapon is welcome. The jaw-bone of a recently fallen ass is at hand, not yet dried up, and therefore less easily broken.<sup>3</sup> Before the enemy can think, perhaps before their shouts over the prisoner have ceased, he is free, armed, and dealing out deadly blows. The panic is as great as the triumph had been. There was nothing but flight and death for the wretched foe. There ensued a slaughter and victory so extraordinary, that Samson himself, in poetic ecstasy, cries out: —

With the jaw-bone of an ass

I slew two armies:

With the jaw-bone of an ass

I took vengeance on a thousand.

For in the clause *בְּלִי חֵמֶר חֵמֶר חֵמֶר* the paronomasia is to be noted between *חֵמֶר*, an

"Samson found a troop of lively soldiers, stretched forth his hand and commanded them, and led them against the Philistines. . . . And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the troops." Against such insipidity protests arose at that time from all sides (cf. Starke, *Not. Select.*, p. 127), from Gebhardt (*De Maxilla Simonis*, 1707) in Greifswald, Sidelmann (*De Maxilla*, etc., 1706) in Copenhagen, and in a little-known, but thorough refutation by Heine, of Berlin (*Dissert. Sacra*, p. 245).

ass, and **חֲמִיר**, a heap, which latter is here poetically used of an "army."

German tradition relates a similar deed of Walter of Aquitania. His enemies pursue him in the forest, while he and Hildegunde roast and eat a swine's back. He seizes the swine's bone, and throws it against the enemy with such violence that the latter loses his eye (*Wilkinasage*, translated by Hagen, i. 289, ch. lxxxvii.). In the Latin poem *Waltarius*, the hero tears out the shoulder-blade of a calf, and with it slays the robbers (Grimm and Schmeller, *Lateinsche Gedichte des Mittelalters*, p. 109 f.). In both versions the fiction is unreasonable and tasteless, whereas the history of Samson is full of dramatic power and spirit. — The mystical sect of the Nasairians, in Syria, are said to venerate the jaw-bone of an ass, because an ass devoured the plant on which the original documents of their religion had been written (cf. Ritter, xvii. 97, 6).

Ver. 17. The name of the place was called Ramath-lechi (Hill of the Jaw-bone). To the height upon which Samson threw the jaw-bone, the tradition of an admiring people gave and preserved a name commemorative of that circumstance. The narrative evinces artistic delicacy in that it relates that Samson uttered his poetic words while he was still victoriously swinging the unusual weapon in his hand. The humiliation of the Philistines, formerly smitten by means of foxes, and now with the jaw-bone of an ass, was too deep to allow the historical recollection of it to perish. To seek another explanation of the name is quite unnecessary. It is undoubtedly true that mountainous peaks sometimes derive names from their forms, as, for instance, "Ass'ears" (on the coast of Aden, cf. Ritter, xii. 675), or "Tooth" (1 Sam. xiv. 4), or "Throat," "Nose," and "Horn" (cf. my *Thür. Ortsnamen*, ii. p. 47, n. 304); but the possibility of an historical explanation is not thereby diminished: for although peculiar names have sometimes given rise to historical legends, the above instances show that quite as often this is not the case. Lehi (properly, Lechi), as the name of a locality, does not elsewhere occur;<sup>1</sup> and a criticism which would make it the source of a history in which it has but an incidental significance, and which forms an organic part of the history of Samson as a whole, has lost all claim to be called criticism.

Ver. 18. And he was sore athirst, and called unto Jehovah. The exertion of the day was too great. The burning sun and the unusual excitement also contributed their part to exhaust the powerful man. But where was there any refreshment? He was alone, as always. The cowardly men of Judah had taken themselves off, in order not to be held responsible by the Philistines on the ground of participation in the conflict. Against the enemy he had that mediate divine help which came to him through his Nazarite consecration; but this was no protection against thirst. He turns, therefore, to God in prayer for direct deliverance.

Thou hast given this great salvation by the hand of thy servant. These words illustrate and confirm the view we have thus far sought to develop of Samson's spiritual life. In his hours of lofty elevation of soul, when the Spirit of God impels him to great deeds in behalf of national freedom, he is fully conscious of the work to which he is called. Although he stands alone, the ends he pursues are not personal. And though his people sink so deeply into cowardice and weakness, as to deny him, yet all his powers are directed against the enemies of this people. Although he himself has scarcely escaped from their hands, and has no one to stand by his side, he nevertheless considers himself their leader and champion, in duty bound to vindicate the honor and glory of Israel against the Philistines. Properly speaking, no one was delivered in the conflict on Ramath Lehi but himself; but he thanks God for "the great salvation given by the hand of thy servant." He finds this salvation in the humiliation experienced by the Philistines, and in the fact that he, as sole representative of the true Israel, has not been allowed to be put to shame. For with his fall, the last bulwark had been leveled. The shouts of the Philistines over his bonds were shouts of triumph over the faith of Israel and over Israel's God. Hence he can pray: "Thou hast just performed a great deed through me, by which the honor of the national name of the children of Israel has been rescued and exalted, let me not now die of thirst, and in that way fall into the hands of the uncircumcised." All benefit of the victory would be lost, if Samson were now to perish. The triumph of the cowardly enemy would be greater than ever, should they next see him as a helpless corpse. He speaks of them as "the uncircumcised" for the very purpose of expressing his consciousness that with him to fight, to conquer, and to fall, are not personal matters, but involve principles. He is none other than the Nazir of God, i. e., the consecrated warrior for God and his people Israel against the enemies of the divine covenant — the uncircumcised. His petition springs from the profound emotion into which the successive experiences of this day have plunged him. The greater his ardor in battle and joy in victory, the more painful is now the thought of losing the fruits of the advantage gained, for want of a little water. Here, too, what instruction we find! "What is man that thou art mindful of him." The mighty warrior, before whom thousands tremble, cannot conquer thirst, and must perish unless a fountain opens itself.

Ver. 19. And God clave the mortar that was in Lehi. At the place where Samson was, God clave a mortar-like cavity in the rock, from which water sprang, of which Samson drank, and refreshed himself. This spring was ever after named "Well of him that called;" for it was his salvation and second deliverance. The words at the close of our verse, "which (well) is in Lehi unto this day," to which those at the beginning of the verse correspond, "God clave the mortar that was in Lehi," put it beyond all doubt that the refer

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Sam. xxiii. 11, where some are disposed to find it in the form **לְחִיָּה** [by reading **לְחִיָּה**, i. e., **לְחִי** with ה local, cf. Thenius, in *loc.*, and Fürst, *Lex.* s. vv. **חִיָּה** and **לְחִי**], the **ל** is manifestly the prefix preposition, as appears from ver. 13. The Targum, it is true, distinguished between the two forms, and rendered the first by **לְחִיָּה**,

the term which it regularly employs to express **עַר מוֹצֵב**; but Gesenius and others before him made a mistake when they took **לְחִיָּה** as the proper name of a locality. It was only a general term, *pagus*, village, which was translated into **עַר** (עיר).

ence is to a mortar-like well-opening in the *place* Lehi, and that (as Keil very well remarked) the old, frequently reproduced exposition (approved also by Bertheau), which bids us think of "the socket of a tooth in the jaw-bone," is entirely erroneous. For from ver. 17, where Samson throws the jaw-bone away, nothing more is said about it, and the name Lehi refers only to the place; just as in ver. 9 the meaning is, not that the Philistines spread themselves about a real jaw-bone, but about the place of this name. The well, it is said, "is in Lehi unto this day." The place derived its name, Ramath-lehi, from the battle of the jaw-bone; but the place was not the jaw-bone, which could not exist "unto this day." The calling forth of the well was a second deliverance, distinct from the first, which was won in battle. It occurred at Lehi, where Samson had conquered, in order that he might there also experience the vanity of all strength without God. The old opinion arose from the fact that, except in ver. 9, the ancient versions (the Sept.) everywhere translated the term Lehi, whereas it is a proper noun in ver. 19 as much as in ver. 9, as Bochart should have known precisely from the article, for it is used in all three instances, ver. 9 included. It is indeed true that later medical writers call the sockets of the double teeth *σλαμοι*, mortars; but, granted that a similar *usus loquendi* prevailed in the Bible,—of which we have no other evidence than this passage can give,—the use of the article would be surprising, because elsewhere (as in Zeph. i. 11) it points (in connection with the noun *מִכְרֵשׁ*) to a certain definite, mortar-like<sup>1</sup> locality. Mention might also be made of the cities in Phrygia and Cilicia that bore the name *Holmos*. The true view was already held by Josephus, the Chaldee Targum, and, with peculiar clearness, by R. Levi ben Gerson. Perhaps it would receive further illustration from the locality which we may probably venture to fix upon for the event. For the question where the event took place is not unimportant. It must be assumed (cf. vers. 13, 14) that Etam and Lehi were not far distant from each other. Moreover, it is evident from the connection of the entire narrative, that the Philistines must have threatened especially that part of Judah which lay contiguous to the region whence Samson made his attacks. For this reason alone, the opinion of Van de Velde (adopted by Keil), who looks for it on the road from Tell Kewelfeh to Beer-sheba, appears improbable. On the other hand, the very ancient tradition which locates the Well of Lehi in the vicinity of Eleutheropolis, appears to me, notwithstanding all opposition, to be entirely probable. It was by a series of interesting observations and arguments that Robinson, Rödiger, and others, established the fact that Eleutheropolis and the modern Beit Jibrin, the Betogabra of the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, are the same place (cf. Ritter, xvi. 139); but the hints of the Midrash might have led to the same conclusion, and even now afford additional instruction. To the peculiarities of the region belong the numerous cave-formations, which, by their more or less perfect artificial finish, prove themselves to have been the abodes of men

in ancient times. *חור* (*chor*) is a cavern, and the term *חורי* (Chorite, E. V. Horite) signifies troglodytes, people who dwell in caverns. Now, wherever the Chorite is spoken of, the Midrash explains by substituting Eleutheropolis.<sup>2</sup> It has not hitherto been discovered what circumstance induced the Romans to give this beautiful name to the place. But since the tradition of an heroic exploit (*תְּשׁוּעָה בְּדוֹלָרָה*) was connected with the place, the Jewish inhabitants derived the name *עִיר חוֹרִי* or *בֵּית חוֹרִי*, which it may have borne, not from *חור*, a cavern, but from *חור*, a freeman. "Bene Chorin," is the title assumed by those whom heroic feats have made free.<sup>3</sup> The same idea leads the Midrash when it derives Eleutheropolis from *chiruth*, freedom. The name Eleutheropolis was, in fact, only a translation of the ancient name, whose meaning the inhabitants had changed from "City of the Troglodyte" to "City of the Free," and is undeniably found in the Mishna and Talmud under the forms *בֵּית חוֹרִין* and *בֵּית חוֹרִין*.<sup>4</sup> If the inhabitants expound the present name Beit Jibrin as meaning "House of Gabriel," every one capable of forming a judgment in the case perceives at once that this became possible only with the prevalence of Islam in those regions. But as the name itself is older than Islam, and is apparently found in the Midrash (as *בֵּית גּוֹבֵרִין*, Beth Goberin), the conjecture suggests itself that it is related to *גִּבּוֹר*, hero, *גִּבּוֹרִי*, heroism; which, if true, connects it once more with Samson's achievement. The "House of Heroism" answers entirely to the "House of Freedom." And it is at least not impossible that a change of etymological derivation, like that in the case of Chorite, occurred here also, namely, from *גִּבּוֹר*, a hero, *גִּבּוֹרִי*, a hero. The expression *נְבוֹר*, a hole, in the sense of jaw-bone, occurs also.

The change of the "Troglodytes' City" into the "City of Heroes," demonstrates the existence of an old tradition, which, so far as the names (Freedom, Heroism) can explain anything, spoke of the hero who there became free. Springs are still found near the city. One in particular, near the Church of St. Anne, flows from the hard rock, is "fifty-two feet deep, and apparently ancient" (Rob. ii. 26). It is to be noted that Josephus makes Samson's fountain to spring out of a rock, and declares that its name was still known in his day. The Targum likewise says that God did split the rock (*פָּצַח*), and translates: "They called it 'the well that arose at the prayer of Samson,' and it exists in Lehi unto this day."

No other well than this [one near the church of St. Anne], can be intended by Jerome, when on passing Socoh, he visits the Fountain of Samson (*Ep. ad Eust.*, 106, ed. Benedict. 86). The tradition continued steadfast until the time of Antoninus Martyr, who says (*circa* 600 A. D.): "We

<sup>1</sup> Including, doubtless, a comparison with the hard, rocky nature of a mortar.

<sup>2</sup> *Serara Rabba*, § 42, p. 87 b. The right reading has been preserved by Aruch, *sub voce*. Our editions of the Midrash read *metropolis*, which only uncritical editors could have overlooked, since the explanation which follows indicates the true reading.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Buxtorff, *Lex.*, p. 836. Israel calls itself by this name in the beautiful hymn *Pesach haggadah*, with reference to the time when Messiah shall have made it free. It is true, at least, that He alone makes free.

<sup>4</sup> On the coexistent position of the place, cf. *Fana* in Benj. of Tudela, ii. 438, note.

came into the city called Eliotropolis, where Samson, that most valiant man, slew a thousand men with a jaw-bone, out of which jaw-bone, at his prayer, water sprang forth, which fountain irrigates that place unto this day: and we were at the place where it rises." Traditions reaching so far beyond the age of Islam, are always worthy of attention, especially when they suit so well in their localities. For the distance from Eleutheropolis combines very well with the theatre of Samson's exploits hitherto, and confirms our assumption that Etam lay in the neighborhood of the present Deir Dubbân. When the Jews grounded the name "City of Freedom" on this tradition, they followed considerations not only beautiful, but also both ethically and historically correct.

It is unquestionably a remarkable feature in the narrative of the occurrence, that, while Samson prays to "Jehovah," the answer is ascribed to "Elohim:" "Elohim clave the mortar." Keil's explanation, that it is thereby intimated that God worked the miracle as Lord of nature, does not seem sufficient. For is not "Jehovah" the Creator of Nature? The Targum uses that name here. According to our view of the relations of the names Jehovah and Elohim in our Book, the latter appears not only when heathen gods are spoken of, but also when others than believing Israelites speak of God. Elohim is here used in order to intimate that non-Israelites also ascribed the wonderful fountain in Lehi to divine intervention. Not only Israel tells of it, how Jehovah clave it, but all admit that it is a work of Elohim.

Ver. 20. And Samson judged Israel, in the days of the Philistines, twenty years. In the introduction to the history of Samson (ch. xiii. 1), it is stated that the Philistines lorded it over Israel forty years. In ch. xiii. 5 it is said: "he shall begin to deliver Israel." Their entire downfall he did not accomplish. The blame of this rested not only with the people, of whom ch. xiii. does not say that they had repented, but, as ch. xvi. shows, also with Samson. But the twenty years during which he wrought are not filled out by the occurrences related. These only indicate what feats and dangers were necessary to qualify Samson for government in Israel. And it may well be supposed that after this the Philistines scarcely undertook to confront him. Doubtless, the tribe of Judah also, must after this last exploit have acknowledged his divine strength, and yielded him their confidence. He himself, in thirst and faintness, had learned that God alone gives strength and help; and this may have served for the moral elevation of the people also. Israel dwelt in security and peace for twenty years, through the consecration and deeds

of Samson. For this reason he stood among them as Judge. It was only the want of courage on Israel's part — due to its imperfect faith — and the excess of it on Samson's part, that plunged both alike into new distress and suffering.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

[BP. HALL: The Philistines that had before ploughed with Samson's heifer, in the case of the riddle, are now ploughing a worse furrow with a heifer more his own. I am ashamed to hear these cowardly Jews say, Knowest thou not, etc. — SCOTT: Heartless professors of religion, who value the friendship and fear the frown of the world, and who are the slaves of sin and Satan, censure, hate, and betray those who call them to liberty in the service of God. To save themselves, in times of persecution, they often apostatize and turn betrayers and accusers of the brethren. — BP. HALL: Now these Jews, that might have let themselves loose from their own bondage, are binding their deliverer. — HENRY: Thus the Jews delivered up our Saviour, under pretense of a fear lest the Romans should come, and take away their place and nation. — WORDSWORTH. This conduct of the men of Judah, saying that the Philistines are their rulers, and delivering Samson to them, may be compared to that of the Jews, saying, "We have no king but Cæsar" (John xix. 15), and delivering up Christ to the Romans.

WORDSWORTH (on Samson's victory): A greater miracle was wrought "in the time of wheat-harvest" (cf. ver. 1), namely, at the first [Christian] Pentecost, when three thousand were converted by the preaching of Peter and of the other Apostles, filled with the Spirit of God. — BP. HALL: This victory was not in the weapon, was not in the arm; it was in the Spirit of God, which moved the weapon in the arm. O God! if the means be weak, Thou art strong!

HENRY (on Samson's prayer): Past experiences of God's power and goodness, are excellent pleas in prayer for further mercy. "Lest the uncircumcised triumph, and so it redound to God's dishonor." The best pleas are those taken from God's glory. — KITTO: Not many would have had such strong persuasion of the Lord's providential care as would lead them to cry to Him for water to supply their personal wants in the like exigency.

HENRY (on En-hakkore): Many a spring of comfort God opens to his people which may fitly be called by this name: it is the "well of him that cried." — TR.]

*Samson visits Gaza. The Philistines meditate his destruction; but he escapes at midnight, carrying the gate of the city away with him.*

#### CHAPTER XVI. 1-3.

- 1 Then went Samson [And Samson went] to Gaza [ʿAzzah], and saw there au
- 2 harlot, and went in unto her.<sup>1</sup> And it was told<sup>2</sup> the Gazites [ʿAzzites], saying, Samson is come hither. And they compassed him<sup>3</sup> in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all the night, saying, In the morning

3 when it is day we shall kill him.<sup>4</sup> And Samson lay till midnight, and [he] arose at midnight, and took [laid hold of] the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them [pulled them up], bar and all, and put *them* upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an [the] hill that *is* before Hebron.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 1. — יָבֹא אֵלֶיהָ. Dr. Cassel, in accordance with his exposition (see below), renders, *und kam zu ihr* "and came (went) to her." This rendering is certainly possible (cf. Gen. vi. 20; Ps. li. 1, etc.); but as the expression is a standing euphemism, the writer of Judges would scarcely have employed it in its more proper sense here, where the context would inevitably suggest the least favorable interpretation. — Ta.]

[2 Ver. 2. — יָבֹא (cf. Gen. xxii. 20) and יִשְׁכַּבְהוּ, has doubtless been dropped out of the text by some oversight of transcribers. The Sept., Targum, and other ancient versions, supply the deficiency, if indeed it existed in their day — Ta.]

[3 Ver. 2. — יִשְׁכַּבְהוּ: the accusative (cf. Eccles. ix. 14) object of this verb is to be disengaged from לוֹ, the object of the immediately following verb. So Bertheau and Kell. Dr. Cassel takes the word in the sense "to go about," to patrol, which would require the object עֵיר (Isa. xxiii. 16) or עֵירָא (Cant. iii. 3) to be expressed. — Ta.]

[4 Ver. 2. — עַד-אֹרֶחַ הַבֹּקֶר הַבֹּקֶר יִהְיֶה: literally, "Until morning light! then we kill him." That is, "Wait (or, with reference to the preceding יִשְׁכַּבְהוּ: Be quiet) until morning light," etc. Cf. 1 Sam. i. 22. אֹרֶחַ is 'he infinitive construct, cf. Ges. *Lex. s. v.* עָצַר, B, 2, b. — Ta.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 1. And Samson went to 'Azzah. The heroic deeds of Samson have driven the Philistines back within their old boundary-lines. They no longer venture to come anywhere near him. He, however, with the fearlessness of genius, undertakes to visit them in their own fortified chief city. 'Azzah, the Gaza of the Greeks, was the most powerful border-city and capital of the Philistines. There, as in Gath and Ashdod, remnants of the Anakim are said to have remained (Josh. xi. 22).

Concerning the etymology of the name עֲזָזָה ('Azzah), different opinions have been expressed. Hitzig's derivation from עֲזָז, "she-goat," has been justly called in question by Stark (*Gaza und die philist. Küste*, p. 46). But by the side of the view which, after the older authorities (from Jerome down) he adopts — which makes עֲזָזָה to be "the strong, fortified city," in contrast with the open country, and appeals to such names as Rome and Valentia as analogous — I would place another, perhaps more accordant with the national spirit of the Philistines. The origin of the name must probably be sought in the worship of Mars-Typhon, the warlike Death-god. Movers has compared 'Azzah, the Træzænian name of Persephone, with עֲזָזָה (*Phönizier*, i. 367). "Strong," in the true sense of the word, may be appropriately predicated of death; accordingly it is said in the "Song of Solomon" (ch. viii. 6): "Strong (עֲזָזָה) as death is love." To the name 'Azzah (Azesia) not only el-Asa, the idol of the ancient Arabians (Mars-Asiz) would correspond, but also and especially עֲזָזָזֶל (Azazel), to whom the Mosaic law sent the goat laden with the sins of the people. The name 'Azzah had its origin in the service of subterranean, typhonic deities, peculiar to the coasts of the Mediterranean sea. Although the Greeks called the city Gaza, it is nevertheless clear that the Indo-Germanic etymology of this word (γάζα), which signifies "public treasure," is not to be brought into comparison.

Samson comes not, alas! like the tribe of Judah

(ch. i. 18), to conquer the city. But it is a question whether the sensuality which at other times lulled his heroism to sleep, was also the occasion of his present visit to Gaza. The *cultus* of the Canaanitish nations, and the beauty of the Philistine women, were favorable to voluptuousness.

Ancient expositors explained זֹנָה to mean a female inn-keeper, a hostess. They were so far right, that the houses of harlots were those that stood open to all comers, including such strangers as had no relations of acquaintance and mutual hospitality with any one in the city. (Compare, in Latin, the transition into each other of *caupo* and *leno*, *caupona* and *lena*.) Hence, the Targum has everywhere (including Judg. xi. 1) translated זֹנָה by פִּנְדָּקִיָּה, i. e., "female innkeeper," *πανδóκεια*. On this account, the spies, also, whom Joshua sent out, and who were influenced by no sensual impulses, could quarter themselves nowhere in Jericho but in the house of a *zonah* (Josh. ii. 1). Samson did not come to Gaza for the purpose of visiting a harlot: for it is said that "he went thither, and saw there a *zonah*." But when he wished to remain there over night, there was nothing for him, the national enemy, but to abide with the *zonah*. This time the narrative gives no occasion to tax him with sensuality. We do not read, as in ver. 4, "and he loved her." His stay is spoken of in language not different from that employed with reference to the abode of the spies in the house of Rahab. The words, "he saw her," only indicate that when he saw a woman of her class, he knew where he could find shelter for the night. The purpose of his coming was to give the Philistines a new proof of his fearlessness, which was such that he did not shun to meet them in their own chief city.

Ver. 2. And when the 'Azzites were told, that Samson was come thither. He had been seen. It was probably towards evening when he entered the city. The houses in which the trade of a *zonah* was carried on, lay anciently and still lie on the walls of the city (Josh. ii. 15), not far from the gates. Although it is not stated whether the inhabitants knew where he was, it must be assumed that they did; for, being in the city, he

had no choice as to his place of abode. The king of Jericho commands Rahab to deliver up the spies; but the description here given of the way in which the 'Azzites set to work to catch the dreaded foe, is highly amusing and characteristic. The most direct way would have been to have attacked him in the house of the *zonah*; but that course they avoid. They propose to lie in wait for him when he comes out. Our author's use of the imperfects *וַיִּשְׁכַּח* and *וַיִּשְׁכַּח* is peculiar and interesting. That of which they speak, and say it must be done, as: "patrols must go about," and "bands must lie in wait all night at the gate," the graphic narrator relates as if it were actually done. They did nothing of the kind, however, but instead of patrolling and watching "all night," they were afraid, and kept quiet "all night" (*כָּל-לַיְלָה*), used twice in order to hint at the contrast between counsel and action which they exhibited). They should doubtless have been on their legs throughout the night, but in fact they *וַיִּשְׁכַּח*, kept themselves still, made no noise, and heard nothing, just as a timid householder, who is afraid of the burglar, feigns to be fast asleep, so as not to be obliged to hear the robbery going on. The gate, they say to each other, is firmly fastened, so that he cannot get out of the city, and to-morrow, at sunrise, we have certainly killed him (the narrator again represents the thing talked about as done, *וַיִּשְׁכַּח*). "Ah yes, to-morrow!" To-morrow, to-morrow, only not to-day, is the language of all lazy people — and of the timorous as well.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 3. But Samson slept till midnight. He had been told that his presence in Gaza was known. How little fear he felt, appears from the fact that he slept till midnight. Then he arose, went calmly to the gate, and (as it was closed and barred) lifted out its posts, placed the doors on his shoulders, and tranquilly proceeded on his way home. Humor and strength characterized all his deeds. On this occasion, however, the mighty jest which he played off on the inhabitants of Gaza, was also the worst humiliation which he could inflict upon them. The gates of a place symbolized its civic and national strength, inasmuch as they represented ingress into it. Samson enacted literally, as it were, the promise made to Abraham: "Thy seed shall possess the gate of its enemies" (Gen. xxii. 17). The fact that Rebecca is dismissed with the same blessing (Gen. xxiv. 60): "May thy seed possess the gate of those who hate it!" indicates the popular diffusion of the idea that to take possession of an enemy's gate is to obtain a complete victory over him. Hence, in the East victorious princes have frequently literally carried away the gates of conquered cities (cf. Hammer, *Gesch. des Osman. Reichs*, i. 267). For the same reason, Almansor, when he took Compostella, caused the doors of the St. James' Church to be lifted out, and to be carried on the shoulders

of Christians, to Cordova, in sign of his victory (Ferreras, *Gesch. von Spanien*, iii. 145). The same idea presents itself in North-German legends, when giants are represented as carrying away churches from their places, in order to show their hostility against Christianity (Schambach and Müller, *Nieders. Sagen*, pp. 150, 151).

But precisely because the removal of the gate of Gaza was expressive of the national humiliation of the Philistines before Israel — Israel having, as it were, in the person of its representative, taken their chief city by storm — it is necessary to take the statement that Samson carried the gate "up to the top of the mountain before (*עַל-רֹאשׁ*) Hebron," in a more literal sense than Keil feels himself bound to do. Hebron was the centre and chief seat of the tribe of Judah. It was probably the abode of Samson also during the twenty years of his judgeship. Israel's triumph and the Philistines' ignominy were both most plainly expressed when the gate of Gaza was lying before Hebron; for it was found appropriate to carry the gates of the chief city of the enemy to the chief city of the conqueror, otherwise Hebron would not have been mentioned at all. As to the difficulty of carrying the gate so far as Hebron, it is unnecessary to waste a word upon it. He who wrenched the gate from its firm security, could also carry it to Hebron. Besides, as soon as he was in Judæa, he had time enough. In Hebron the evidences of the great hero's triumph and the Philistines' humiliation were probably exhibited long after the event took place. Even when nations seem least capable of doing great things, it is yet a cheering sign, promissory of better days, if they take pleasure in the great deeds of former times. Israel was in servitude for the very reason that it no longer knew the greatness of its ancestors (ch. ii. 10). Whoever takes pleasure in Samson, affords some ground to hope for freedom.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

The ancient church used the gate of Gaza, as a type of the gates of hell destroyed by Christ. A modern art-critic, it is true, has remarked that most of the pictures which were supposed to be representations of Samson, carrying away the gates of Gaza, are not such, but represent the paralytic of the gospels, who took up his bed and walked (Martigny, *Dictionnaire*, p. 599). But the essential matter is, not the pictures, but the spirit. Gaza is, as it were, the stronghold of the enemy. Samson, who enters it, resembles Christ, who is laid in the grave. But the enemy cannot bind the living Word. He not only rises from the dead, but He deprives the fortress of its gates, so that it can no longer detain any who would be free. Only he remains a captive, in whom sin reigns, and passion is supreme — who would be free from Christ.

<sup>1</sup> [The above explanation of ver. 2 is more ingenious than satisfactory. The text does not speak of what the Philistines said ought to be done, but of what was done. It is true, that this view meets with the difficulty of explaining how Samson could carry off the gate, and the watchers be apparently none the wiser. The answer is probably that after the guards and liars-in-wait were posted,

these rendered sleepy by inaction (*וַיִּשְׁכַּח*), and confident that Samson would not leave the *zonah* until morning, became "quiet" in a sense beyond that intended by the instructions they had received — in other words, allowed themselves to fall asleep. Cf. Bertheau and Kel. Ta.]



*Samson's fall. He loves a Philistine woman, and, confiding to her the secret of his strength, is betrayed into the hands of his enemies.*

CHAPTER XVI. 4-20.

4 And it came to pass afterward [after this], that he loved a woman in the valley of  
5 Sorek, whose name *was* Delilah. And the lords [princes] of the Philistines came  
up unto her, and said unto her, Entice [Persuade] him, and see wherein his great  
strength *lieth*, and by what *means* we may prevail against him, that we may bind him  
to afflict [lit. humble, i. e., subdue] him: and we will give thee every one of us eleven hun-  
6 dred *pieces* of silver. And Delilah said to Samson, Tell me, I pray thee, wherein  
thy great strength *lieth*, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict [subdue]  
7 thee. And Samson said unto her, If they bind me with seven green withs [moist  
cords],<sup>1</sup> that were never [have not been] dried, then shall I be weak, and be as an-  
8 other [any other] man. Then the lords [princes] of the Philistines brought up to her  
seven green withs [moist cords], which had not been dried, and she bound him  
9 with them. (Now *there were* men lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber.)<sup>2</sup>  
And she said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he brake the  
withs [cords] as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth [smelleth] the fire. So  
10 his strength was not known. And Delilah said unto Samson, Behold, thou hast  
mocked [deceived] me, and told me lies: now tell me. I pray thee, wherewith thou  
11 mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If they bind me fast [omit: fast] with  
new ropes that never were occupied [with which no work was ever done], then shall  
12 I be weak, and be as another [any other] man. Delilah therefore took new ropes,  
and bound him therewith, and said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Sam-  
son. (And *there were* liars in wait abiding in the chamber.)<sup>3</sup> And he brake them  
13 from off his arms like a thread. And Delilah said unto Samson, Hitherto thou hast  
mocked [deceived] me, and told me lies: tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound.  
14 And he said unto her, If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with [i. e., into]  
the web [i. e., the warp]. And [she did so, and] she fastened *it* with the pin, and said  
unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he awaked out of his sleep,  
15 and went away with [pulled out] the pin of the beam [loom], and with [omit: with]  
the web [or, warp]. And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I love thee, when  
thine heart *is* not with me? Thou hast mocked [deceived] me these three times, and  
16 hast not told me wherein thy great strength *lieth*. And it came to pass when she  
pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, *so* that his soul was vexed unto  
17 death; That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a  
razor upon mine head; for I *have been* [am] a Nazarite unto God from my mother's  
womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak,  
18 and be like any [all] *other* man [men]. And when [omit: when] Delilah saw that  
he had told her all his heart, [and] she sent and called for the lords [princes] of  
the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewed me<sup>4</sup> all his heart.  
Then the lords [princes] of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought [the]  
19 money in their hand. And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for  
a man, and she caused him to shave [and she shaved]<sup>4</sup> off the seven locks of his  
20 head; and she began to afflict [subdue] him, and his strength went from him. And  
she said, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep,  
and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself [free].<sup>5</sup> And he  
wist not that the Lord [Jehovah] was departed from him.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 7. — יִתְּרִים לְחִים: literally, "moist cords or strings." KEN: "יִתְּרִי means string, e. g., of a bow, Ps  
x. 2, and in Arabic and Syriac both bow-string and guitar-string. Now since the יִתְּרִים are here distinguished from  
the עֲבָרִים, ropes (ver. 11), the former must be understood of animal tendons or gut-strings." It is certainly in favor  
of this view that the יִתְּרִים are to be "moist," as also that it makes a strong and climactic distinction between יִתְּרִים  
and עֲבָרִים. Compare the rendering of the LXX.: νευραὶς ὑγραῖς. — TR.]



[2 Ver. 9. — **וְהַלֹּחֵט יָשָׁב לָהּ בַּחֲדָר**: "and the lurker sat for her in the apartment." In itself considered, **אָרַב** might be collective, as rendered by the E. V. (cf. ch. xx. 33); but, although other Philistines may have been near at hand, it would be difficult to conceal the presence in the room itself of more than one, and hence it would hardly be attempted. **לָהּ** is *dat. commodi*. The rendering, "with her," adopted also by Cassel (and De Wette), is not indeed impossible, but gives to **לָהּ** a meaning which it rarely has, and which is here less suitable. — Ta.]

8 Ver. 18. — The reading **לִי** of the *keri* is evidently the correct one, notwithstanding Keil's remarks in favor of **לָהּ**. Keil would make the clause a remark inserted by the narrator: "for he had showed her (**לָהּ**) all his heart." — Ta.]

[4 Ver. 19. — **וַתִּגְלַח**: "and she shaved." The *piel* is not causative here; compare the *pual* in ver. 17. The E. V. seems to accept the interpretation of the Vulgate and Alex. Sept., which translate **וַתִּגְלַח** by "barber." "The man" (**וְהָאִישׁ** = **וְהָאִישׁ**) is probably the Philistine who was on duty at the time as "lurker;" and Delilah calls on him, in order to have somebody near to defend her should Samson wake during the shearing process. Cf. Keil. — Ta.]

[5 Ver. 20. — **אֶמְצָר**: Dr. Cassel translates, *will mich ermannen*, "put on and assert my manhood." He supposes Samson to see the Philistines, and to express his determination to give them battle as heretofore (see below). But not to say that **אֶמְצָר** will not bear this sense, it seems clear that the "other times" refer to the previous attempts of Delilah to master his secret. — Ta.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 4. And it came to pass that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. Let him who stands, take heed lest he fall. This is valid also for the powerful personality of Samson. It is true that the adventures, in which sensuality ensnared him, had hitherto been only occasions for acting as the hero of his people. But it is true also that his present love differs in many respects from that which he gave to the woman of Timnah. Then he was young, and for his people's sake needed natural occasions for war against the Philistines — to say nothing of the fact that at that time he sought lawful matrimony. Now, he has long been a man. His strength and greatness need no more demonstration. Delilah was not his wife: if not a "*zonah*," she was still but a weaver-woman, whom he saw and loved. Moral dangers, like all dangers, may, in the providence of God, serve to give experience to a man, and afford him opportunities for victory; but to run into them, in the confidence of winning new victories, is not permitted, even to a Samson. The "Nazir of Elohim" is not to be measured by common rules; everything is lawful for him; but only so long as he does not desecrate by means of itself the strength with which he is endowed.

By giving the name of the place where, and of the woman whom, Samson loved, the narrator already foreshadows the temptation into which he placed himself. The Nachal (Valley of) Sorek is evidently named after a variety of the grape — in appearance almost stoneless, yet provided with a soft stone, and productive of a precious red wine (cf. Jer. ii. 21; Isa. v. 2) — which elsewhere gives the name Kischmi to an Arabian island (Ritter, xii. 452). Of the position of the Nachal Sorek we have no other tradition than that of Eusebius, who knew a place named Sorech (*al. l. Barech*), north of Eleutheropolis, in the vicinity of Zorah, the home of Samson. But this tradition can scarcely be accepted. For the place, judging from the connection of the narrative, cannot have been remote from Gaza (cf. ver. 21). Nay, even the immediate connection of our narrative with the previous occurrence in Gaza, points to the vicinity of the latter city. Moreover, it is to be supposed that precisely in the region indicated by Eusebius, all

Philistine supremacy was abrogated by the growing fear of Samson's activity as Judge. Nor is it difficult to see that the tradition followed by Eusebius, connects itself with the exegesis of ch. xiii. 25. It will therefore be an allowable conjecture, to assume as the theatre of the sad catastrophe which is now related, the present wretched village Simsim, whence the Wady (Nachal) Simsim, passed by the traveller on the way from Gaza to Ashkelon, where it debouches, derives its name (Ritter, xvi. 68). It is remarkable that another, albeit in this respect erroneous tradition, led astray by the name Askulân, Ashkelon, has identified this wady with the brook Esheel, which must indeed be sought near Hebron, but which likewise derived its name from the grapes of that region.

The name of the woman would not have been given by the narrator, had he not wished to intimate the same idea which R. Mair expressed (*Sota*, 9, 2; *Talkut*, n. 70),<sup>1</sup> when he remarked, that even if Delilah had not been her name, she might nevertheless properly be so called, because **דִּילְדִּילָהּ**

**וְהָאִישׁ כֹּוְהָ**, "she debilitated his strength." The form **דִּלְדִּלָהּ** (from Chaldee **דִּלִּל**) has clearly also given rise to the name **Δαλιδά**, which is given to Delilah in the Septuagint and in many MSS. of Josephus, and which is therefore probably not a false reading. We meet also with a Greek female name **Δαλῖς**, **δαλιδος**. The name Delilah reminds us readily of the onomatopoetic German word *ein-lullen* [English, to lull asleep], Greek **Βαυκαλῶ** (whence a proper name **Βαυκαλος**). Sensuality sings and lulls the manly strength of the hero to sleep. The voluptuous chiefs<sup>2</sup> of the Philistines know this full well, and therefore they say:

Ver. 5. Persuade him, and see wherein his great strength lieth. Samson was no giant, coarse and elephantine, like a Cyclops; otherwise, they would have had at no loss to explain his strength. The shoulders on which he bore the gate-doors of Gaza were not sixty ells apart, as in the figurative expression of the Talmud. He was regularly built, although we may conceive of him

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Bamidbar Rabba*, § 9, p. 134 b.

<sup>2</sup> **סָרְרָיִם**, **סָרְרָיִם**: probably etymologically connected with the Greek *σπαρ-ος*. The Targum translates **סָרְרָיִם** **סָרְרָיִם**.

as tall and stately; full of spirit, yet good-natured and kind, as the possessor of true divine genius always is.

But on this very account, because physically he did seem very different from themselves, and as they knew not the power of divine inspiration, they entertained the wide-spread superstition, still current in the East, that he had some occult means at his service, from which he derived his unusual strength. The expressions for amulets and charms for such and similar purposes, are still very numerous in the Persian and Arabic idioms. Rustem, according to the Iranian legend, could not have overcome Istêndiâr, if he had not previously learned the charm which gave the latter his strength. Scandinavian mythology, also, puts Thor in possession of his highest strength, only when he puts on the girdle which assures it to him. Even in Germany, the superstition was prevalent until comparatively recent times, that persons had sometimes become "fearfully strong" through the use of demoniac flesh (Meier, *Schwäb. Sagen*, p. 111). In the year 1718 a person confessed that the devil had given him a receipt, in the possession of which he felt himself stronger than all other men (cf. Tharsander, *Schauplatz unger. Meinungen*, ii. 514 f.).

It was all important for the Philistines to learn Samson's charm, in order to render it powerless. They hear of his love for Delilah. They were aware that before this the hero had failed to withstand the cajoleries of the woman he loved. In both earlier and later times, the orientals were conversant with the dangers which often arise to even the greatest heroes and kings, from their weakness toward women. Tradition and poetry are full of it. In the apocryphal Esdras (I. ch. iv. 26 f.) we read: "Many have gone out of their wits for women, and have become slaves on account of them. Many have perished, and erred, and sinned, by reason of women." And the Turkish poet Hamdi says: "Brother, if thou comest to women, do not trust them. Women have deceived even prophets." Though this be true, all women are not thereby defamed. Traitors like Delilah are only those who are such as she was, just as the only lovers of treason are cowardly men, like the Philistines, who dare not meet greatness openly.

And we will give thee eleven hundred pieces of silver each. It is a very mean trade that is here driven with the affections of Samson. It is an instance so deterrent, that it might well move deeply and instruct both young and old. The woman of Timnah betrayed Samson either from fear or from Philistine zeal: this one sells him for money; and the Philistines with whom she trades are very careful in making their promises. It is not enough, they stipulate, that she ascertains the secret; it must be such that use can be made of it, and that with the particular specified result. This carefulness shows that the cold-blooded Philistines knew with whom they had to do. So much the sadder is it to see Samson lavish caresses on such a woman. The sum for which Delilah consents

to sell the hero is not insignificant. Since each of the princes promises 1,100 shekels of silver, and since, according to Judg. iii. 3, the number of princes may be set down as five, the sum pledged amounted to 5,500 shekels, between 4,500 and 5,000 [Prussian] Reichsthaler [*i. e.*, between 3,000 and 3,500 dollars].<sup>1</sup>—Had Curius, the Roman, been less niggardly towards Fulvia, his *scortum*, the Catilinian conspiracy might perhaps have been more successful (Sallust, *Catilina*, 23).

Vers. 6-9. If they bind me with seven fresh cords. Delilah accepts the offers held out by treason, and begins to insinuate herself into Samson's favor<sup>2</sup> by inquiries about his strength. But Samson does not tell her the truth. Why not? Because from that moment he would have been obliged to have nothing more to do with her. For her questions reminded him of the divine origin of his strength, which was not given for such a house, and which after a true answer could no longer be secure there. As soon as he told the truth, he must either depart or perish, separate from his charmer or suffer. The mediæval poetry in which heroes of superior origin live peaceably with women, but are obliged to separate from them as soon as these begin to inquire after their descent, represents the same thought in poetical garb. The wife's questions, however, in these fictions, are not put with treasonable intent. They nevertheless drive the man away (cf. my work: *Der Schwan*, p. 21, etc.).

Want of confidence and national fellowship<sup>3</sup> do not permit Samson to give the true answer to Delilah. But if these be wanting, how can he consort with her, even leaving her questions out of view? That this is not impossible, is but too plain; but the explanation of it is unpleasant. Samson, in his sensual sports, lays no claims to morality, and the heroism, in which he feels himself secure, sleeps under the pleasing sensations of the play. He would continue to divert himself, and therefore prefers not to tell the truth. In the "seven cords," however, he already hints at the "seven locks" of his head. Here is the germ of his fall. He seeks to quiet Delilah by some sort of answer. Seven cords of animal tendons, not yet stretched (cf. Saalschütz, *Archäologie*, i. 141, note 8), are undoubtedly sufficient to render a strong man incapable of defending himself. It was an answer which Delilah might reasonably believe, while for himself it contained no danger; for who will put the cords on him, except by his own permission? Even when at a subsequent visit Delilah had the cords in readiness, and coaxed him to allow her to bind him with them, he could still consent to be passive. Had the Philistines actually attacked him, it would but have afforded him a desirable opportunity for an heroic feat. But the Philistines are careful, and keep at a distance until they see how the trial will end. When Delilah raises the cry of Philistines, Samson rends the cords asunder as so many threads of tow. He gave a proof of his strength, but gained no victory.

however, who regards her as "a light, venal woman of Samson's own tribe," makes a suggestion worthy of consideration on the other side. "Hence," he says (namely, she being an Israelitess), "she professed love for Samson, when she said, 'The Philistines' (mine enemies as well as thine) 'are upon thee, Samson.' He was the more easily caught in the snare because he could not imagine that a woman of Israel would betray him."—Ta.]

1 The Targum speaks of 1,100 silver *silin* (שִׁלִּין) from שֶׁלֶם. On the relation of the sela to the shekel, cf. my "*Jüdische Geschichte*," in Ersch and Gruber's *Encyclopædie*, p. 30.

2 (Compare Jos., *Ant.* v. 8, 11.—Ta.)

3 (Dr. Cassel assumes all through the present discussion that Delilah was a Philistine woman. He is probably correct, cf. Smith's *Bible Dict.*, art. "Delilah." Wordsworth,

**That** which the principle of evil here attempts against the hero, Scandinavian mythology, in the Edda, represents inversely. The "Ases" (demigods) are afraid of the "Wolf" (the representative of evil). They persuade him to allow himself to be bound, in order to show his strength. He tears asunder one chain after another, until he is bound by means of a singular cord, whose symbolical sense makes it the same as that under which Samson succumbs; for it is the cord of sensuality. — It is a distorted form of our narrative which we find in the Slavic story of the strong son, who rends the rope in pieces, but succumbs under the thin string, which cuts into his flesh.

Vers. 10-12. If they bind me with new ropes with which no work was ever done. Samson's contempt of the Philistines is so great, that he does not even become angry with Delilah, whose behavior nevertheless could not but appear suspicious to him. And she knows her power over him so well, that, after the ancient manner of women, she seeks to escape the reproaches which he might be expected to make against her, by anticipating them with her own against him. And that with all the brazen effrontery characteristic of women whose charms are great and whose hearts are bad. "I saw Apame," it is said in the apocryphal Esdras (I. ch. iv. 29 ff.), "taking the crown from the king's head, and striking him. If she laughs upon him, he laughs; if she is angry at him, he flatters her, that she may be reconciled to him." Delilah, with treason in her heart, dares to tax Samson with falsehood. But she uses this feigned sensitiveness and her crocodile tears to renew her attempts to gain his secret and her reward. Still he does not tell her the truth; but yet she makes an advance towards her end. It could not be otherwise. For although Samson's greatness only jests, it is nevertheless true that his godlike strength was not given for sport. The playfully received reproach that he had told her lies, drives him involuntarily a step nearer the truth which her demand profanes. Satan already draws his snares one stitch closer. For when he tells her that he can be bound by new cords "with which no work has been done," the added qualification is not an empty and meaningless one. He was already once bound with "new cords" (ch. xv. 13), and set himself free. But the cords "with which no work has yet been done," are an image of his strength; the hair of his head also is unprofaned — no razor has ever touched it. Strength and consecration were characteristic of the things yet uncontaminated by the uses and defilements of life. The vehicle on which the ark of God is transported must be drawn by animals never before yoked, and must itself be new. The Philistine diviners (1 Sam. vi. 7) know this; the law of Israel also recognizes the principle, in its requirement that the red heifer of purification shall be one upon whom yoke never came<sup>1</sup> (Num. xix. 2). Availing himself of this belief, Samson speaks of "new cords, which have never done service," in order by this suggestion of special strength in them, to make his answer more credible, while it at the same time gives a reflection of the truth with regard to himself.

But the treason does not yet succeed. The Philistine spy, who is present but concealed (פִּתְּרִי, in the inner apartment), must for the

second time depart, disappointed and gloomy. The cords fall from his arms like threads. It was for him but a pleasant pastime thus to give Delilah one more proof of his strength, hoping perhaps to deter her from further questioning. If he did believe this, it could only be in consequence of his magnificent confidence, which in the consciousness of strength verged toward weakness. But natures like Delilah's do not relax; avarice and vexation urge them on. In the Old-French romance of Merlin, that wise man says that such women are, "*hameçons a prendre poissons en rivière, reth a prendre les oiseaulx a la pipée, rasours tranchus et affilez.*"

Vers. 13, 14. If thou weavest the seven locks of my head into the web. He still conceals the truth; but also once more yields a step. The untruth constantly diminishes, the danger constantly increases. He thinks no longer of actual ropes; he speaks already of the locks of his head. Formerly, he hinted at them, under the figure of that which is untouched of labor, but named cords; now he names his hair, but does not yet speak of its untouched consecration. So organically does his own noble nature press him onward into the snares set for him by the reproaches and tears of the traitress. As soon as he determined either to tell the truth, or not to tell it, he must break with the traitorous tempter, and part from her; and if he does not do this, it is precisely his ordinary, noble impulse toward truth, which even in jest and in the face of treason he cannot deny, that drives him on to destruction.

Expositors find the answer of Samson very difficult to be understood, but needlessly. Delilah had in her apartment a weaver's loom, at which she worked. It was doubtless of the upright, primitive form. It is probable that the technical terms connected with the weaver's art in Egypt were also prevalent on the Phœnician coast. Weaving women have also been found depicted on Egyptian monuments. The word מִפְּתֵר signifies the web on the loom. Hesychius (cf. Schleusner, *Thes.* iii. 529) has a form μέσασκον, which is explained to mean "weaver's-beam." It is then added: "Some make it mean ἀντίον, others μεσάκτων." The latter word is manifestly מִפְּתֵר, and the same as μεσάντων, which only the LXX. know, and is certainly not Greek, although ἀντίον occurs elsewhere.

The Targum represents it by מִשְׁתֵּי־הָרֶגֶל, which is evidently derived from the same technical expression. Delilah is to work the hair of Samson, who places himself near the loom, into her web as wool. This could only be done from above. Herodotus (ii. 35) informs us, that the Egyptians, unlike other nations, inserted the wool, not from below upward, but from above downward. Samson's locks were long enough to form a close and perfect web; for it is added that she also struck in the הָרֶגֶל, the batten, in order to show that it was

a regular piece of weaving. הָרֶגֶל is what Homer calls the κερκίς, staff, equivalent to our "batten." The Greek κερκίς, also, means a pin, nail, just as the Hebrew הָרֶגֶל does elsewhere. During the weaving, Samson had fallen asleep. Had he been unable to extricate his hair, he would at least have been unfree in his movements. But at the cry "Philistines!" he awakes. He gives one wrench, and the web tears, the batten shoots out, and the seven locks are free. They are called מַתְּקָפוֹת

<sup>1</sup> Mediæval superstition reproduces this also. Cloths are required for alchemical purposes which have been finished by "undefiled persons."

a word found only here. It comes from חֶלֶךְ, not, however, from that which means "to change," out from the equivalent of πλέκω, with which, consonant changes being taken into account, it is identical (חֶלֶךְ = פֶּלֶח = פֶּלֶךְ = πλέκω). The πλόκαμοι, locks, are seven, in accordance with the sacred number of perfection and consecration. Delilah finds herself deceived for the third time. The Philistines become impatient and dubious. No mention is made this third time of a spy, awaiting the issue of the trial. Even the second time, it is not stated, as at the first attempt, that the Philistines brought her the cords. The woman sees herself defrauded of her large gains, and turned into a laughing-stock besides. She therefore brings everything to bear to overcome the hero. She employs all her arts to torment him. He does not love her—has no heart for her—has deceived her: such is the gamut on which her tears and prayers are pitched. In point of fact, the threefold reproach is a threefold injustice. The three answers he has given, looked at carefully, form as it were an enigma, in which the truth lies concealed: in the first, the "seven;" in the second, the "consecration;" in the third, the "locks." He is really too great to lie; and therefore he falls a victim. Had he only lied thoroughly, lied once more, he had been free. The Philistines would not have returned; Delilah would have ceased. But Samson's history is a finished tragedy. He falls by reason of his greatness, which hinders him from avoiding the thrust of the serpent whom he has once suffered to approach his heel.

Samson's pliability has met with sufficiently frivolous apprehension. "Strong Samson," says Rousseau (*Emile*, ed. 1782, iii. p. 200), "was not so strong as Delilah." This is erroneous. It was because he was so strong and Delilah so weak, that he fell. He stumbled over an opponent who was too little to contend with. Rousseau compares him with Hercules in his relations to Omphale. This also is incorrect. That myth is nothing but a representation of the sun, who as hero descends into the lap of repose. It has no dramatic-historical interest. Omphale makes no demand of anything with which the prosperity and freedom of a nation are connected. Nor is it more correct to look for analogies among the tasks which, in tradition and poetry, are imposed on lover-heroes by their mistresses. Those are mere trials of strength, without moral character. The historian of the Incas says, panegyrically, of Huayna Capac, one of the last monarchs of Peru (died 1525), that "he was never known to refuse a woman, of whatever age or degree she might be, any favor that she asked of him" (Prescott, *Peru*, i. 339, note). Samson had certainly refused Delilah, had he not been so great in his strength, so unique in his manifestation, so elevated above his time, so true even in evasion, so earnest in sport. The weakness of Pericles for Aspasia, even if not without influence on affairs of state, was not dramatic—for they mutually valued each other; but Samson's love is tragic, because the play in which in his greatness he indulges, causes his feet to slide on account of it.

Vers. 15, 16. And his soul was vexed unto death. If Samson remained, he must succumb. The national hero of Israel who cannot separate himself from a Philistine woman, must fall. In vain has he sought three times to put her off with a jest. The avarice and knavery of such women are not to be escaped from by witty turns. She knows that at last he cannot hide the truth from her. Precisely his greatness and fearlessness enable her to compass his destruction. He remains; and she does not cease her efforts, until at last he is wearied of her ceaseless teasing (וַתִּתְּצֵהוּ).<sup>1</sup>

She bored him to death (וַתִּתְּצֵהוּ) with tears and reproaches. He wished to have rest—and to remain; nothing was left, therefore, but to grant her wish. Such is the philosophy of many husbands who yield to women ambitious of rule. To be sure, they are their wives, before God and men, and the danger is not always so great as here. Samson, although he remains, finds himself so plagued, that in order to quiet Delilah, everything else is indifferent to him. He determines to tell her the true reason of his great strength. But will she not wish to test the truth of what he tells her? and will he not thereby lose his strength? He considers it not. But this strength which he puts in jeopardy, it is not his own possession? He does not reflect. It was given him for the freedom of his people against the Philistines. But he will tell her the truth, come what may, in order to have peace. Delilah had doubtless promised him not to abuse his secret. He believes her promise, if only he can silence her. He was wearied to death, so that his courage, the freshness of his mind, and his passion for victory were benumbed—and all that, when one step out of her house would have set him free! Abstinence unfolded his strength; Delilah in the Wine-Valley (*Nachal Sorek*) put it to sleep.<sup>2</sup> When he killed lions, he was full of happiness and relish for life: now, he is wearied unto death. In Timnah, his wife betrays him, and affords him an opportunity for a glorious victory: now, he betrays himself, and falls.

Ver. 17. If I be shaven, then my strength will go from me. Expositors, from the earliest ages down, have here made mention of the Greek myth of king Nisus of Megara, and have even regarded it as a disfigurement of what is stated here. But on closer inspection of the sources whence we derive our knowledge of the Greek myth, the greater part of the analogy which it seems to offer with our narrative falls away, and the idea from which it springs is seen to be very different. It is nowhere stated that Nisus would lose his dominion if his hair were shaved off; but only that on his gray head there grew a single purple hair, with which his fortune was connected (Apollod. xv. 2: πορφυρέαν ἐν μέσῃ τῇ κεφαλῇ τρίχα; cf. Ovid, *Metam.* viii. 8: "Splendidus (crinis) ostro inter honoratos medio de vertice canos.")<sup>3</sup> It is true that his daughter betrayed him: but that was not his fault. Not he, but his daughter, was blinded by sensual love for the enemy. The principal idea, the weakness of Samson himself, is wholly unrepresented. Why only the purple hair

*Rer. Brunsvic. Illustr. Inscr.* ii. 989: "Samson opio potatus," etc.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Hyginus, *Fab.* 198: purpureum crinem. Virgil, *Idyll.* ver. 121: *Candida casaries . . . et roseus medio fulgescit vertice crinis.* The "golden hairs" of Schwara (*Urspr. d. Mythol.* p. 144) are therefore to be corrected as also *Bertheau's* "protecting hair."

<sup>1</sup> חֶלֶךְ occurs only here; cf. ἀλγος, ἀλγύνω. Similar is חֶלֶךְ, hunger.

<sup>2</sup> In the Middle Ages it was believed that she had stupefied him by means of opium. This view transmitted itself even into the "Chronicon Engelhusii," in Leibnitz, *Script.*

contained this *fiducia magni regni*, we are not informed. But it must probably be explained by the assumption of some connection with the purple light of the Sun, and the vast knowledge which that deity was supposed to possess — thus making it a pledge of wisdom rather than strength; for Nisus was no Hercules. This view is corroborated by the different turn given to the idea in popular traditions. For just as Christianity portrayed the devil as one who arrogates the power and appearance of the light, and presents himself as an angel of light, so popular conceptions have represented him with a cock's feather, as the symbol of light, and from a kindred point of view, have invented the charm of "golden devil's-hairs" to attain to universal knowledge (cf. my *Eddischen Studien*, p. 86). In all this there is no resemblance to the life-like, historical picture here drawn of Samson. Still, it cannot be denied that the Biblical narrative has apparently furnished the basis of many superstitious distortions, however coarse most of them may be. Among these the case of Apollonius of Tyana, whom Domitian caused to be shaved, is not to be reckoned, however; for that was probably only designed to inflict dishonor. But it is not delusive to find one of them in the opinion that magicians and witches were insensible to torture, until the hair had been shaven from the whole body — an opinion which led to many detestable proceedings, but was also speedily condemned by many (cf. Martin Delrio, *Disquis. Magicæ*, lib. v. § 9, pp. 764 f., ed. Cölln. 1679; Paulini (1709), *Philosoph. Luststunden*, ii. 169; Schedius, *De Diis Germanis* (1728), p. 388).

Ver. 18. And Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart. Old Jewish expositors say that she knew this because "words of truth are readily recognizable," and because she felt sure that he would not "take the name of God in vain." She followed up her discovery with proceedings sufficiently satanical. She at once sent to the Philistine chiefs to request them to visit her once more. This time he had undoubtedly opened his heart to her. She did not, however, intoxicate him, and proceed to her work, before they came. They must first bring the money with them. As for them, they soon made their appearance, and, concealed from Samson, awaited her call.

Ver. 19. And his strength went from him. As soon as the seven locks of his head had fallen, he ceased to possess the superhuman strength which had hitherto resided in him. But in the beginning of his history, in the annunciation of his birth and character to his parents, it is not intimated that by reason of the hair which no razor was to touch, he should possess such strength. Nor is it anywhere mentioned that Samson, the child, was already in possession of this giant strength, as soon as his hair had grown long. On the contrary, it is said, "And Jehovah blessed him." Had it been his long hair that made him so strong, there would have been no necessity for the Spirit of Jehovah to "come upon him," when he was about to perform some great deed for which the occasion presented itself. What sort of strength his long locks, as such, could give him, is clearly seen when nothing but God's intervening help saves him from perishing through thirst. The growth of the unshaven hair on the head of a Nazarite, was only a token of his consecration,

not the consecration itself. Similarly, the seven locks of Samson were only the sign of his strength, not the strength itself.<sup>1</sup> The strength of Samson depended, not on the external locks, but on the consecration of which they were the symbol. Hence, he needed God's help and Spirit, and received his strength not because of his long hair, but because of his vocation.<sup>2</sup> For God's nearness is granted not to all whose hair is long, but only to those devoted to his service. But just as in Israel he ceased to be a Nazarite who shaved his hair, so Samson's consecration departed from him when he removed its sign. When he failed to withstand Delilah, he surrendered not so much his hair, as his divine consecration. He denies his election to be a "Nazir of God," when he gives his hair to profanation. His consecration was broken, for he voluntarily allowed it to be profaned by the hands of the Philistine woman; his courage was broken, for he had done what he would not do; his joyousness was broken, when he yielded with half his heart, wearied, and in conflict with himself; his conscience was broken, and would not be drowned in the intoxication of Sorck-grapes; his manhood is broken, for he is no longer a whole man who, in a waking dream, betrays the sanctuary and glory of his life to the enemy: in a word, his strength is broken; and of all this, his fallen locks are not the cause, but the sign. The departure of his strength is not an externally caused, but an inwardly grounded moral result. Virgil says (*Æneid*, iv. 705) that the real life flame (*calor*) of the deceased Dido ceased to exist only with the severing of the hair from her head. This idea, raised into the sphere of moral truth, applies to Samson. His long hair was no amulet, conditioning the enjoyment of the Spirit of God — for without it the Spirit rested on Gideon and Jephthah, filling them with heroic virtue; but when, with a restless heart, he consciously threw himself and his people, for wine and love, into the power of the harlot, he became a broken hero. Since he himself says, and fully believes, that his strength is in his hair, and nevertheless gives himself up, it is evident that a breach has opened between his passions and his reason; and this breach made him a broken man. This moral rupture distinguishes Samson's fall from similar histories. The legend concerning Sheikh Shehabeddin, in the "Forty Viziers" (ed. Behrman, p. 25) is in many respects shaped after the catastrophe of Samson; but the arts by which he escapes from the Sultan who persecutes him, are those of magic. When a woman finally persuades him to betray his secret, it turns out that it consists only in certain external washings. All moral interest is wanting, both in the attack and in the defense. The Siegfried legend in the Nibelungen is more beautiful. The wounded part of the hero is also entirely external; but its betrayal is wrought by love, not by malice. Chriemhild, from love to her husband, becomes the discloser of his weakness, which a man betrays. In Slavic (cf. Wenzig, p. 190) and North German legends (cf. Müllenhoff, p. 406) magicians and strong persons do not carry their hearts about with them, but keep them wonderfully concealed. It is only by women's arts that opponents ascertain where it is. The primitive, moral ideas contained in these legends, are disfigured under the wrappings of childish distortions.

<sup>1</sup> Such is also the Roman Catholic representation found in Bergier, *Dict. Théologique*, p. 635: "La conservation de ses cheveux était la condition de ce privilège comme la marque

de son nazarét, mais nullement la cause de sa force sur-naturelle."

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Samidbar Rabba*, § 14. p. 214 d.

Ver. 20. And she said, The Philistines are upon thee! In previous trials, cords and weaver's loom had shown Delilah and her confederates the unimpaired condition of Samson's strength. This time, rendered confident by Delilah's word, the Philistine chiefs are themselves present. Samson rises, reeling, from sleep, sees the thick crowd, and, thinking that everything is as formerly, says: "I will go out to battle as at other times!" He suits the action to the word—but—

He wist not that Jehovah was departed from him. Appropriately does the narrator substitute "Jehovah" here for "strength," thus confirming what has been remarked above. The Spirit of strength, consecration to God, integrity of soul, the fullness of enthusiasm, the joyousness of the unbroken heart, were no longer his. This is already apparent from the fact that he did not know that God had left him. Whoever has God, knows it; whomsoever He has left, knows it not. When he was near his end, he could pray; but now, in his state of semi-intoxication and intellectual obscuration, he can neither fight as formerly, nor call on God, and so—he falls.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Samson was a Nazarite. He bore the sign of the general priesthood. The consecration of God was upon his head. It fired his will, gave his strength, and guided his error into the way of salvation. But when he profaned it, and in weakness allowed Delilah's unholy hand to touch it, he lost both strength and victory. God left him, because he held the honor of his God cheaper than his own pleasures. Because he gave up that which he knew was not his own, God left him in dishonor to find his way to penitence. He who could not withstand the allurements of a woman, even when they demanded the surrender of his vocation, was not worthy any more to withstand the enemy. His eyes, blinded by sensuality, saw not the treason: soon, blinded by the enemy, he should see neither sun, nor men, but only God. That done, he turned back, and God came back to him.

It is not a beautiful comparison which is sometimes instituted between Delilah and Judas the

traitor. For Samson was in fault, and Delilah was a Philistine. The woman is more excusable than the disciple who rose against his pure Master. But Samson is the type of all such children of men as know God, praise his grace, pray to Him, derive strength and love from Him, and yet fall. Sin is the ever present Delilah, who caused David, the Singer, to fall, and brought him to fearful repentance. Samson himself, rather than Delilah, was for a moment the traitor, who delivered the honor of his Lord to the insults of the enemy. Let no one think that he can safely enter danger. Pride goes before a fall. Self-confidence comes to a bad end; only confidence in God conducts through temptation. It is very proper to pray: Lord, lead me not into temptation; but very far from proper to enter into it of one's own free-will.

The lust of the eyes is not guiltless. It is the gate to the most carnal desires. Sin always tortures, even as Delilah tortured Samson. It is never wearied in its efforts to induce virtue to betray itself. Flee, if thou canst not withstand! To flee from sin is heroism. Had Samson but run away from Delilah, as a coward runs, he had surely smitten the Philistines. Every lapse into sin must be repented of. None of us have aught wherein to glory, but all stand in need of repentance. When Saul recognized his sin in having persecuted Jesus, he became blind. But soon he saw, like Samson, no one but his Saviour.

"Make me blind,  
So I but see thee, Saviour kind."

STARKE: Even great and holy persons may fall into gross sins, if they do not watch over themselves.—THE SAME: To uncover our whole heart to God is our duty, but we are not bound to do it to our fellow-men.—THE SAME: In the members with which men sin against God, they are also usually punished by God.—GERLACH: Samson thinks to hold as his own, and to use as he pleases, that which was only lent to him, and of the borrowed nature of which his Nazarite distinction continually reminded him. It is thus that he prepares his deep fall for himself.—[WORDSWORTH: Samson replied to Delilah's temptations by three lies; Christ replied to the devil's temptation by three sayings from the Scripture of truth.—TR.]

*Samson's end. He slays more Philistines in his death than he had done in life.*

#### CHAPTER XVI. 21–31.

- 21 But [And] the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza [Azzah], and bound him with fetters of brass;<sup>1</sup> and he did grind in the
- 22 prison-house. Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after<sup>2</sup> he was
- 23 shaven. Then [And] the lords [princes] of the Philistines gathered them [themselves] together, for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice:
- 24 for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. And when [omit: when] the people saw him, [and] they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer [devastator] of our
- 25 country [land]: which slew many of us [who multiplied our slain]. And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for [omit: for] Samson that he may make us sport.<sup>3</sup> And they called for [omit: for] Samson out of the prison-house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars

- 26 And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel [touch]<sup>4</sup> the pillars wherenpon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them.
- 27 Now the house was full of men and women: and all the lords [princes] of the Philistines *were* there: and *there were* upon the roof about three thousand men
- 28 and women, that beheld [looked on] while Samson made sport. And Samson called unto the Lord [Jehovah], and said, O Lord God [Jehovah], remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once
- 29 avenged<sup>5</sup> of the Philistines for my two eyes. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up [and he leaned upon them], of [on] the one with his right hand, and of [on] the other with
- 30 his left. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with *all his* [omit: *all his*] might; and the house fell upon the lords [princes], and upon all the people that *were* therein. So the dead which he slew at his death
- 31 were more than *they* which he slew in his life. Then [And] his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought *him* up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the burying-place of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 21. — Dr. Cassel translates, "put him in fetters (*Ketten*);" and adds the following foot-note: "בְּחִשְׁתָּיִם, as at 2 Kgs. xxv. 7, etc., are iron fetters (*eiserne Ketten*), compare our expression to lie in irons. The fetter consisted of two corresponding parts, hence the dual." The word "iron" in this note is probably to be taken in the general sense of "metal," for בְּחִשְׁתָּיִם unquestionably means "brazen fetters." — Tr.]

[2 Ver. 22. — בְּצִיָּאֵר: "about the time that," or "as soon as." The word intimates that Samson was not long in the wretched condition of prisoner. As soon as his hair began measurably to grow, the events about to be related occurred. So Bertheau and Keil. — Tr.]

[3 Ver. 25. — וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה. Like the E. V., Dr. Cassel, De Wette, and Bunsen (*Bibelwerk*), adopt general renderings, which leave the kind of sport afforded by Samson, and the way in which he furnished it, undetermined. Bush remarks that "it is quite improbable that Samson, a poor blind prisoner, should be required *actively* to engage in anything that should make sport to his enemies." But the decidedly active expression in the next clause, וַיִּצְחַק לְפָנֵיהֶם, can scarcely be interpreted of a mere passive submission to mockery on the part of Samson (cf. also ver. 27). The word צִחָה (שִׁחָה) is a softening of the same form) is used of mimic dances, cf. Ex. xxxii. 6; 1 Sam. xviii. 7; 2 Sam. vi. 5, 21, etc. There is surely no great improbability in supposing that the Philistines in the height of their revels should call upon "a poor, blind prisoner" to execute a dance, for their own delectation and for his deeper humiliation; while, on the other hand, Samson's acquiescence may be explained from his desire to gain a favorable opportunity for executing his dread design. After the fatiguing dance, his request to be permitted to "lean upon" the pillars would appear very natural. — Tr.]

4 Ver. 26. — וַיִּמְשַׁח (instead of the erroneous Kethibh וַיִּמְשֵׁחַ, from a root מָשַׁח, which does not occur): from מָשַׁח, מָשַׁח, μάσσω, to touch; onomatopoeitic, like *palpare*.

[5 Ver. 28. — וְאַתְּקָהּ בְּעֵינָיִךְ. Dr. Cassel's rendering is very similar to that of the E. V.: *Dass ich noch einmal Vergeltung nehme um meiner zwei Augen willen* — "let me once more take vengeance, this time for my two eyes."

But unless בְּעֵינָיִךְ is here feminine, contrary to rule, this rendering is against the consonants, to say nothing of the vowel points. The text, as it stands, must be read: "that I be avenged with the vengeance of one (sc. eye, which is fem.) out of my two eyes." Compare the exegesis below. — Tr.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 21. And the Philistines laid hold of him. The catastrophe is terrible. The fall of a hero is sorrowful and lamentable beyond anything else. Wretched enemies make themselves master of one who for twenty years had been victorious. In the giddiness of a broken spirit he succumbs to the multitude, as a wounded lion succumbs to a pack of yelping hounds. But even in this extremity, he must have given proof of the strength of his arm. The cruel precaution of the Philistines indicates this. They do not kill him, for they hate him too intensely; but even before they bring him to Gaza, they put out his eyes. He must be made powerless by blindness; not until then, they think, will it be wise to lay aside all fear of him. Well

does the Jewish expositor remark on this infliction, that Samson now loses his eyes, and is fettered with chains, because heretofore he followed his eyes too much, and allowed himself to be fettered by the allurements of the senses. In what horrible sins will not the savage hatred of men engage! All cruelty is a frenzy of unbelief; but sin is raving mad when it offends against the eye, and stops up the fountain of light, life's source of joy and freedom. It does not excuse the Philistines that they are not the only ones who have resorted to this satanic practice. The practice, like every other sin, has its world-wide history. A profound and thoughtful myth concerning this matter is found in Herodotus (ix. 93), according to which the blinding of Evenius, a priest of the Sun-god, is punished on the false zealots who inflicted it. Never



theless, this infernal fury has been familiar to men in every land on which the sun shines.<sup>1</sup> The monuments of Nineveh show us a king, who with his lance puts out the eyes of his prisoners, as Nebuchadnezzar caused to be done to Zedekiah, the fallen king of Judah. There existed even different theories of this cruel art. Among the Persians, as Procopius informs us (in his *Persian Memorabilia*, i. 6), it was usual either to pour red-hot oil into the eyes, or to dig them out with red-hot needles. The latter mode is probably expressed by the Hebrew

פָּרַחַת, to bore out the eye, *oculum effodere* (cf. my *Schamir*, p. 86). The terrible method of passing over the eye with a glowing iron, was not considered to be always effective, and left in many cases some slight power of enjoying the light (cf. Desguigne's *Gesch. der Hunnen*, iv. 93, etc.). The Middle Ages called it *abbacinare* (so the Italian still); for Christian nations have not kept themselves free from this abomination. It was practiced not only among the Byzantines (where Isaak Comnenus is a celebrated example), but also among the Franks (cf. Chilperich's laws, in Gregor. Turon., *Hist. Franc.*, vi. 46); likewise among the Normans, where, to be sure, Robert of Belesme (the Devil) did not content himself with it. German popular law also placed it among its penalties. In the sedition of Cologne (1074), it was, as Lambert relates, inflicted on his enemies by the ecclesiastical prince of the city. Reminiscences of it are preserved in the popular legends of North Germany. We may cite the story of the man who derived great strength by means of a blue band which he wore, and who, after a woman had betrayed him, was deprived of his eyes (Müllenhoff, p. 419).

The story which represents Belisarius, the great hero of Justinian's reign, as deprived of his eyes, and begging for oboli in the streets of Constantinople, is a fiction of later times; but it falls far short of the unspeakable misery actually endured by Samson. The consciousness of the treason of which he had been guilty towards God, and which had been so terribly practiced toward himself; the fall from a height so glorious and prosperous, into an indescribable dishonor; the impotence of the formerly victorious freeman, the blindness of one so sharp-witted, the chains on his consecrated body, the yells of triumph of the cowardly foe, — all this overwhelmed his soul so powerfully, that one less great than he had died for grief. And his people kept silence. But the Philistines still feared him, even in his blindness. They fettered him with iron chains, and made him turn a mill in the prison.<sup>2</sup> Deeper dishonor could not be inflicted. For the hero of divine freedom was made to perform the work of a slave. It is well known that in antiquity the work of grinding was done by slaves (Ex. xi. 5; xii. 29). The slaves thus employed were moreover considered the lowest,<sup>3</sup> worth less money than any others, and as such found themselves in the worst situation (cf. Böckh, *Staatshaushalt der Athener*, i. 95, ed. 2d). The depth of Samson's humiliation is as great as his former elevation. But in the midst of his untold sufferings, —

Ver. 22. The hair of his head began to grow again. With blinded eyes he began spiritually to see — fettered with chains he became free — under slavish labor he ripened for the freedom of God.

While he was yet prosperous, the person of Delilah interposed between his sight and his calling and duty for his people; now, though blind and within prison walls, he saw the power and greatness of his God. He recognized his error, and repented. The greatness of the fallen Samson consisted in this, that, like all noble natures in similar circumstances, he became greater and freer in the deepest suffering than he had been before.

Ver. 23, 24. And the princes of the Philistines assembled themselves. A general feast of thanksgiving and sacrifices was to be celebrated in Gaza. This shows that Gaza was at that time the leading Philistine city, and that Dagon, the fish-shaped god (27, fish), was regarded by them as the embodiment of the religious antithesis between them and Israel. Dagon, the sea-god, as it were, who protects the cities on the coast, over against the God of Israel, who has won the main land. The celebration arranged by the Philistines, attended by all their tribes and princes, testifies to the unhealed-of terror inspired by Samson. The circumstance that they express their joy in the form of thanksgivings and sacrifices to their god, is, in itself considered, singular, seeing that they well knew by what foul means the victory had been gained; but it is none the less instructive. Israel could learn from it that the Philistines regarded every victory over one of their number as at the same time an act of their deity, — being better in this respect than the Israelites, who continually forgot the great deeds of their God.

Ver. 25-27. Call Samson that he may make us sport. The Philistine thanksgiving was like themselves. Men may be known by their feasts. Here there was no thought of humility. Seriousness also is wanting, although they remind themselves of their losses. The truth is, repentance, most attractive in prosperity, is unknown to heathen. They praise their god, it is true, but they do not pray. They celebrate a popular festival, characterized by eating, drinking, and boasting. They were in high spirits over a victory for which they had not fought. Their joy reaches its acme when they send for Samson. He is brought in, chained like a bear. A people shows its worst side when it heaps mockery and insult on a defenseless foe. How would the Romans have treated Hannibal had they taken him prisoner? How was Jugurtha treated, when he was dragged into Rome in the triumph of Marius? But this Numidian fox was rendered insane over the disgrace inflicted upon him (Plut., *Vita Mar.*, 12). The blind lion of Israel, on the contrary, walks calmly on, already conscious of the restored consecration of God on his head. His appearance afforded the highest sport; and the circumstance that every Philistine could dare to touch and mock, and otherwise abuse the blind hero, raised their mirth to the highest pitch. But pride goes before a fall; and they did not yet sufficiently know the man whom they derided.

And they placed him between the pillars. Much has been written concerning the architectural style of the building in which the occurrence took place. Bertheau is not wrong in saying that it is impossible to come to any particular determination in this matter. It was not essential to our narrator's purpose to give an architectural de-

<sup>1</sup> If Herodotus is to be believed, the Scythians blinded every slave (iv. 2). Alexander Severus is reported to have said, that whenever he saw a bad judge he felt inclined to put his eye out with his finger (Lampridius, 17; cf. *Salmasius* on the passage.)

<sup>2</sup> Later writers, in putting king Zedekiah at the same labor, intended doubtless to conform his fate to that of Samson (cf. Ewald, *Gesch. Israels*, iii. 748, 2d edition).

<sup>3</sup> Which fact explains the anecdote in *Ellian*, *Variae Historiae*, xiv. 18.



**scription.** Nevertheless, his language affords the materials for an intelligible conception. The design of placing Samson between the pillars was evidently to enable all to see him; in other words, to put him in the midst of the assembly. Now, according to ancient conceptions, Heaven and Atlas are keepers of pillars; and whether they *hold fast*<sup>1</sup> both pillars, or with their shoulders themselves constitute the pillars, they cannot leave their places without causing the heavens to fall. This poetical view is also found in Job xxvi. 11, where the pillars of the heavens reel at God's reproof. Of this conception the temple-building at Gaza was a representation. Two mighty pillars supported the chief beams of the vast building. Round about the house there ran a gallery, where the populace found

a place. This was called **גָּלְרִי**, the same term which is applied to the flat roofs of oriental houses, which, properly speaking, are only open galleries, surrounded by trellis-work. These estrades or galleries cannot have been supported by the main pillars;<sup>2</sup> for in that case many would not have been able to see Samson. The hero would be visible to all, only if he stood in the lower space, between the pillars on which the house was supported, the gallery extending around the sides of the house, and fastened to them; and there is nothing at variance with this in his request to the lad to be allowed to lean upon the pillars. On closer inspection, our narrator tells much more **than** is at first apparent. Samson was evidently previously acquainted with the arrangement of the building. He knew, too, that he had been placed in the centre, or it may have been told him by the lad. There were other pillars: perhaps a portico extended around the building. But Samson requests expressly to be led to the principal pillars, "on which the house rests." The lower part of

the house was filled with **אֲנָשִׁים וְנָשִׁים**, men and women of distinction, together with the princes, and was called **בֵּית הַנְּשִׂאִים**; the gallery (**גָּלְרִי**) contained three thousand persons, **אֲנָשִׁים וְנָשִׁים**, i. e., the common people. That this gallery was in the house, that is, under the covering upborne by the pillars, and hence fell with the house, is evident from ver. 30, where we read that the "house fell" upon all "that were therein."

**Ver. 28. And Samson called unto Jehovah.** This shows that he had fully recovered himself. As soon as he can pray again, he is the hero again. The prayer he now offers is full of fervor and intensity, rising heavenward like smoke from the altar of incense. It is the deep and vast complaint which, after the awful experiences of the last days, grief and hope have caused to gather in his soul. He uses all the names of God with which he is acquainted, and confesses Him, in the darkness which surrounds him, more deeply and fervently than formerly when enjoying the light of the sun. And withal, his thoughts are beautifully arranged. For fervor excels all homiletical art. The prayer divides into three parts, and makes use of three names of God. Each part contains three nicely separated thoughts. He begins: "Lord (**יְהוָה**) Jehovah (**יְהוֹוָה**), remember me." In the midst of servitude, chained and fettered by the Philistines, who lord it over him, bring him in and send him out as they choose, his spirit calls

upon **Adonai**, the Lord who is in heaven. In the midst of Philistine jubilations over the victory of their idol, the seeming triumph of their Dagon, he calls on Jehovah, the great God of Israel, for He alone is the Lord. Alone and forsaken, surrounded by raging foes, he cries to God: "Do thou remember me." The word **יָדַע** is most frequently used of God's gracious mindfulness of any one, expressing itself in caring for him. It is with a heart full of penitence that he makes this petition. For formerly God had departed from him, and he had been deprived of God's care over him. If now God but takes thought of him, he will once more be received into divine favor.

**And strengthen me, only this once, O God.** "Strengthen me." He no longer puts his trust in himself, nor yet in his growing hair. The source of the consecration and strength which formerly adorned him, and for the return of which he pleads, is in God. For this reason, he invokes

God anew, — this time as **אֱלֹהִים**. **Elohim**, with the article, is the true, the only Elohim, namely, the God of Israel (cf. above, on ch. vi. 20 and 36; and on ch. viii. 3; xiii. 18). While all around him, the enemies praise their god as the victor (ver. 24), he prays to the God of Israel, that He, the real Elohim, the true strength, would strengthen him "yet this once." He does not ask to be the former Samson again. He has done with life. After such disgrace, he would not wish to return to it. Only for "this time," he prays for strength, which God gives and takes as He will, allowing no one to suppose, as Samson formerly did, that it is an inalienable possession, whether used or abused. In the third place, he declares the purpose for which he desires the strength: —

**That I may yet once take vengeance on the Philistines,** by reason of my two eyes. Is it right to pray thus? For Samson it is. For he was called to recompense the Philistines; his whole task was directed against the tyrants. He fell only because instead of avenging the wrongs of his people on their oppressors, he squandered his strength with the Philistine woman. If now he desires the restoration of his lost strength, he can lawfully do so only for the purpose for which it was originally given. To rend cords in pieces for sport was not his business, but to make the enemy acquainted with the power of the gracious God of Israel.

But may he then demand recompense for his "two eyes?" As Samson, he may. In his prayer, it is true, he did not plead his consecration as a "Nazarite of God;" in his humility he dares not use this plea, since a razor has passed over his head. But it was nevertheless on this account that he had his strength. It resided in him, not as man, but as Nazarite. It was not his, although he misused it; it was lent him, for his people, against the enemy. But now, his strength, even if fully restored, would avail him nothing. The loss of both his eyes rendered it useless. He could not, like a blind chieftain, — like Dandolo, the doge of Venice, and Ziska, the Bohemian, — lead his people to battle, for he is no chieftain, but a hero, who stands and fights alone. The loss of his eyes therefore, closes his career. Blindness disables him from serving longer as the instrument of the God of Israel. Hence, he desires vengeance, not for

<sup>1</sup> As implied in the words: *ἔχει δὲ ῥέ κίονας*, *Odys.*, i. 53.

<sup>2</sup> As Stark thinks (*Gaza*, p. 332) whose conception is for all that by no means clear. Nor is it necessary to suppose

that the pillars were wooden posts. In a building of such size, they were most likely of stone.

the scorn, dishonor, chains and prison, to which he has been subjected, but only for his *two eyes*<sup>1</sup> — had they left him but one! The vengeance he seeks is not for himself, but for his people and the God who chose him.

His language, it is true, contains the contrast of *one* recompense (בְּקִיּוֹמֹהוּ) for his *two eyes*. The explanation is that he can strike but one blow more; but that one, in his mind and within his reach, will suffice for both eyes. He will inflict this blow on the Philistines, who all around him praise the idol who gave them victory, whereas it was only his former mental blindness that caused his fall, and his present physical blindness that gives them their sense of security.

Three times he attempted to withstand Delilah — three times he played with his strength, — and fell. Now, he prayed three times, to the thrice-named God, the triunity of Jehovah, for understanding and strength.

Ver. 29. And Samson took hold of the middle pillars. He shows himself in all his old greatness again. For the first time he stood again in a crowd of Philistines, and at once began to think of battle. And notwithstanding the wretched condition in which he found himself, he fixed at once on the point where he intends to execute his deed. His blindness becomes a means of victory. He stands between the central pillars, on which the building rests, and between which the distance is not great. Being blind, it may be allowed him to take hold of them, in order to support himself by them. (That לָפַת may mean to take hold of, although found in that sense only here, is shown by the analogy of the Sanskrit *labh*, Greek λαμβάνειν, λαβέιν.) He presses them firmly with both arms, and says: —

Ver. 30. Let me die with the Philistines. The very conception of the deed is extraordinary. While the Philistines rejoice, drink, and mock, worse than Belshazzar, and fancy the blinded hero deeply humiliated and put to shame, he, on the contrary, is about to perform the deed of a giant, and stands among them in the capacity of a warrior about to enter battle, who only tarries to commend his cause to God. It is true, he cannot do what he intends to do without losing his own life; but he lived only to conquer. Victory is more than life. To talk here of suicide is wholly unsuitable. He did not kill himself when plunged in the deepest dishonor. He is too great for cowardly suicide; for it is a species of flight, and heroes do not flee. No: the blinded man perceives that the present moment holds out an occasion for victory, and avails himself of it, notwithstanding that it must cost him his own life.<sup>2</sup> It is not as if he would have killed himself, had he escaped. He knows that if his deed be successful, he cannot escape. But he is also ready to die. He is reconciled with his God: his eyes have again seen Him who was his strength.

<sup>1</sup> Consequently, I cannot follow the unsuitable exegesis which makes Samson ask to be avenged for *one* of his two eyes. That would be simple vindictiveness. The בְּיָמָיו is comparative. He desires a vengeance greater than his two eyes, and taken on account of them. The Jewish exegesis only follows a special homiletical idea, which at bottom understands "two eyes."

<sup>2</sup> Augustinus, *De Civit. Dei*, 1, 26: *Quid si enim hoc fecerint non humanitus decepti sed divinitus iussu, nec errantes, sed obediētes, sicut de Samsonē aliud nobis fas non est credere.*

The tragedy ends terribly. Laughter and shout and drunken revel are at their highest, when Samson bends the pillars with great force:<sup>3</sup> they break, the building falls,<sup>4</sup> — a terrific crash, and the temple is a vast sepulchre. O Dagon, where is thy victory? O Gaza, where is thy strength? Princes and priests, together, with cups at their lips, and mockery in their hearts, are crushed by the falling stone. With piercing cries, the vast crowds are pressed together. The galleries, with their burdens, precipitate themselves upon the heads of those below. Death was swifter than any rescue; the change from the sounds of rejoicing to groans and the rattle of death, terrible as the lightning. In the midst of them, great and joyous, stood the hero, and met his death. Not now with the bone of an ass, but with pillars of marble, had he conquered the foe. Dagon's temple, with its thousands, had been heaped up as his grave-mound. Since Samson must die, he could not have fallen greater. Traitors, tormentors, mockers, enemies, tyrants, all lay at his feet. The blind hero died as the great victor, who, in penitence and prayer, expiated, by suffering and death, the errors of which he had been guilty.

The history of Samson excels all poetry. The simple narrative of it is at the same time adorned with the highest art. Its fidelity and truth are testified to by the heart of every reader. Without magic arts, with only natural grief and death, it is nevertheless full of spiritual marvels.

But who furnished the report of the last hours of the hero's life? Who escaped, — so as to set forth his praying and acting? It would seem as if this also were not left quite unhinted by the brief narrative.

A lad, an attendant (בְּנֵי), leads him, when the Philistines call him in from the prison (ver. 26). It may be plausibly conjectured that this was no Philistine. It seems not improbable that Samson, the Judge, was followed into his prison by an attendant, whose fidelity continued unshaken. It enhanced the triumph of the Philistines to allow this. Upon this supposition, many points explain themselves. This attendant, then, may have furnished him with a description of the festive scene into the midst of which he was introduced, and informed him in what part of the building he was placed. From him he could also obtain guidance to the spot which he deemed it necessary to occupy. This attendant was in the secret of his prayer and purpose; and if we assume that he dismissed him before the catastrophe, we are at once enabled to explain how he could take up his peculiar position by the pillars without exciting attention. Thus the faithful follower escaped death, and quickly reported the event at home.

Ver. 31. And his brethren and all his father's house came down. This is the first hint we have of interest in Samson on the part of his brethren, and the house of his father. The haste, however, with which they proceeded to Gaza, and the great

<sup>3</sup> The occurrence in Paus. vi. 9 is not well adapted to be brought into comparison.

<sup>4</sup> The terrors of a similar calamity, although on a smaller scale, were experienced by King Henry, the son of Barbarossa, in 1183, when the pillars and floor of the "Probstel," at Erfurt, gave way. Many perished. Only the king and the bishop, who sat in a niche, escaped (cf. *Chron. Mont. Serrn*, under 1183, p. 48, ed. Mader). On the 21st of July, 1864, one of the granite pillars, which supported the dome of the Church of the Transfiguration, at St. Petersburg, broke. A frightful catastrophe ensued, as the church crumbled to pieces over the masses whom curiosity had drawn together.

fellowship in which they did it, speak well for them. They may have arrived soon enough to see the heap of ruins, with its countless dead bodies, just as it fell. They took Samson and carried him up in solemn funeral procession (such is probably the meaning of *וּנְקָמָה לָאֵלֹהִים*), to the burial-place of his father, who had not lived to see the sorrow of his great son.<sup>1</sup> The terrified Philistines permitted everything. Anguish and mourning reigned among them. Everything was in confusion — their princes were dead. And so the corpse of the hero who smote them more fearfully in death than in life, was borne in silent procession along their borders.

And he judged Israel twenty years. This statement is here repeated in order to intimate that Samson's official term had not come to a close before the events just related, but terminated with it.

Samson lived and died in conflict with the national enemies, the Philistines. The same fate has befallen his history and its exposition, from the time of Julian the imperial Philistine to that of many writers of the last centuries. It was especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that irreverence was too often called criticism, and that frivolous insipidity was considered free inquiry. The æsthetic rapidness which was in part banished from the field of classical and German literature, continued to nestle in the exegesis of the Old Testament.<sup>2</sup> Joh. Philipp Heine may indeed have been right in saying (*Dissertat. Sacre*, p. 259), that the mockery at Samson's jaw-bone and foxes, had an ulterior object in view; but it was for the most part the Philistine-like, prosaic character which ordinarily marks genuine unbelief, that was unable to comprehend and rightly estimate the wonderful drama of Samson's life. An unfruitful comparison with Hercules was constantly iterated, although deeper insight clearly shows that, apart from the lion-conquest common to both, Hercules is of all Greek heroes the least suitable to be compared with Samson. The ingenuity of the earlier ecclesiastical teachers might, nevertheless, have led them to this comparison. But according to Piper (*Myth. der Christl. Kunst*, i. 131), primitive Christian art never represented even so much as the conflict of Samson with the lion; and later works of art connected Hercules with David as well as with Samson. Menzel (*Symbolik*, ii. 380), is of opinion that the representation of Samson, in the act of tearing open the jaws of the lion, over French and German church-doors of the Middle Ages, is an imitation of similar Mithras pictures. The representation of Samson with one foot on the lion, while with his hands he throttles him, typical in Byzantine pictures, is essentially the same conception (Schäfer, *Handbuch der Malerei*, p. 127). The noblest conception of him in modern poetry, is that of Milton's *Samson Agonistes*; but that drama treats only the end of Samson's life, and notwithstanding its lofty thoughts and Christian fervor disfigures the beautiful simplicity of Scripture by operative additions. Händel's oratorio, *Samson* (performed for the first time in London, October 12, 1742), the text of which is by Milton, but not worthy of the great subject, is celebrated. The esteemed composer, Joachim Raff, intended to prepare a Samson opera; but whether it was ever per-

formed I do not know. At what a low ebb the appreciation of the Book of Judges and of Samson stood in the last century, is shown by Herder's dialogue (*Geist der Ebräisch. Poesie, Werke*, ii. 204), in which the poet endeavors indeed to elevate the narrative, but can only find its "most characteristically peculiar and beautiful features," in matters incidental to the main story.

It is not quite clear how the Roman Catholic legend made a physician of Samson;<sup>3</sup> and it was certainly far from appropriate when a jurist of the seventeenth century (La Mothe leayer, died 1672) represented him as the model of a skeptical thinker.<sup>4</sup> He is a type of the ancient people Israel itself (cf. the Introduction), which is everywhere victorious, so long as it preserves its consecration intact, but falls into servitude and bondage as soon as it profanes its own sacred character. The types of the ancient Church fathers, in which they compare the life and sufferings of Samson with Christ, are very ingenious; and the pure and elevated disposition they manifest therein, finding spirit because they seek it, is greatly to be admired. A wood-carving over the choir-chairs in the Maulbronn monastery represents Samson with long waving hair, riding on the lion, the symbol of death, whose jaws he tears apart; while, on the opposite side, the unicorn lies in the lap of the Virgin, — together symbolizing the birth and resurrection of Christ. For to him applies the saying of the Apostle (Heb. xi. 32, 33), that by faith he stopped the mouths of lions.

It is worthy of mention that while the names of the other Judges, Othniel, Ehud, Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, scarcely ever recur among the Jews, that of Samson was frequently used, both anciently and in modern times.

In the address of Samuel (1 Sam. xii. 11), the name of a hero Bedan is inserted between Jerubbaal and Jephthah, who can be none other than Samson. The reading *Bapák* of the LXX. is without any probability in its favor. Bedan is Ben Dan (literally, "Son of Dan"), i. e., "the Danite." The familiar use of this name in honor of the tribe, was undoubtedly connected with the blessing of Jacob on Dan, which after the life of Samson must have seemed to have special reference to him: "Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel." The primitive consciousness of the prophecy of Jacob reveals itself herein; and nowhere could it be said with more profound significance than here, — "I wait for thy salvation, O Jehovah" (Gen. xlix. 18).

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Samson, having found his God again, died as a hero. His brethren carried him into his father's grave. His victory was greater in death than in life.

Ancient expositors compare his death with that of Christ. But Samson gave up his life in order to cause his enemies to die: Christ in order to give them life. Samson died gladly because he had found his God again; in Christ God was never lost. It is, however, a good death, when one sees himself restored to communion with God. If the Christian, in the last brief hour of the cross, holds fast his faith, the thousand foes let loose against

<sup>1</sup> It is therefore only poetically that Milton represents Manoa as still alive at the time of Samson's catastrophe.

<sup>2</sup> In a writing against the Jews (Berlin, 1804), Samson's action is styled "*scheusslich*" (abominable).

<sup>3</sup> If indeed Samson be meant. Cf. Raynaud, *Tituli Cætus Lugdunensis*, Works, viii. 571.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Bayle, *Dict.* iii. 2558.

him by sin and temptation fall before him. When a Christian suffers, the representatives of evil place themselves round about him with laughter and mockery; and if he endures, his victory in death is greater than in life. Strong as Samson, was the weak woman Perpetua (in the second century); in the midst of tortures she said, "I know that I suffer, but I am a Christian." Thousands of martyrs have died as Samson died. They have conquered through the cross, and have heaped mountains of dishonor upon their enemies. But they were not all buried by their brethren. They found no places in their fathers' graves. Only He from whom nothing is hidden knows where they lie. At the last day they shall rise, and the eyes of them all shall be free from tears. Samson was alone; he also died alone. For his people he fought alone and suffered alone. After his death, the tribe of Judah raised itself again to faith. The remembrance of Samson preceded the deeds of David. Let no one fear to stand alone, whether in suffering or in conflict. The words of a faithful heart are not spoken in vain. The seed falls, not into the blue sky, but into God's living kingdom, and in its spring time will surely rise.

STARKE: The eyes of the mind are better than the eyes of the body. We can better spare the latter than the former. — THE SAME: For God and native land life itself is not to be accounted dear, but should gladly be surrendered; and he alone who does this is truly entitled to the name of a valiant hero. Thus, also, didst thou, O Saviour, our better Samson, conquer in dying. — GERLACH. Samson sported before the Philistines, not as one who, fallen from a merely human height, endeavors with smiling scorn to maintain his self-consciousness amid the downfall of the perishable things of this world, but deeply impressed with the vanity of everything that seeks to set itself up against the Lord — of "the vain war of the earthen pots against the rock" of which Luther speaks — and therefore seizing with faith on the renewed promises of divine grace. — THE SAME: He becomes thoroughly convinced that, mutilated in his face, he could never again live among men, exposed to the scorn of the enemies of the Lord, and that therefore his work is done; his play is turned into bitter earnestness, and while he falls and dies, he gains the greatest victory of his whole life.

## PART THIRD.

THE conclusion of the Book, tracing the evils of the period, the decay of the priesthood, the self-will of individuals, and the prevalence of licentiousness, passion, and discord, to the absence of a fixed and permanent form of government.

### FIRST SECTION.

THE HISTORY OF MIOAH'S PRIVATE TEMPLE AND IMAGE-WORSHIP: SHOWING THE INDIVIDUAL ARBITRARINESS OF THE TIMES, AND ITS TENDENCY TO SUBVERT AND CORRUPT THE RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS OF ISRAEL.

*Micah, a man of Mount Ephraim, sets up a private sanctuary and engages a wandering Levite to be his Priest.*

#### CHAPTER XVII. 1-13.

- 1 And there was a man of Mount Ephraim, whose name was Micah [Micayehu].
- 2 And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred *shekels* of silver that were taken from thee,<sup>1</sup> about which thou cursedst, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it. And his mother said, Blessed be thou of the Lord
- 3 [Jehovah], my son. And when he had [And he] restored the eleven hundred *shekels* of silver to his mother, [and] his mother said, I had wholly dedicated<sup>2</sup> the silver unto the Lord [Jehovah] from my hand for my son, to make a graven image
- 4 and a molten image:<sup>3</sup> now therefore I will restore it unto thee. Yet [And] he restored the money [silver] unto his mother; and his mother took two hundred *shekels* of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image

5 and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah [Micayehu]. And the man Micah had an house of gods [a "Beth Elohim," God's-house], and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated [appointed] one of his sons, who [and he] became his priest. In those days *there was* no king in Israel, *but* every man did *that which* was right in his own eyes. And there was a young man out of Beth-lehem-judah of the family of Judah, who *was* a Levite, and he sojourned there [temporarily]. 8 And the man departed out of the city from [out of] Beth-lehem-judah, to sojourn where he could find a *place*: and he came to mount Ephraim to the house of 9 Micah, as he journeyed. And Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, I *am* a Levite of Beth-lehem-judah, and I go to sojourn where I 10 may find a *place*. And Micah said unto him, Dwell [Abide] with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten *shekels* of silver by the year, and 11 a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. So the Levite went in. And the Levite was content [consented] to dwell with the man, and the young man was [became] unto 12 him as one of his sons. And Micah consecrated [appointed] the Levite; and the 13 young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah. Then said Micah, Now know I that the Lord [Jehovah] will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to [seeing the Levite has become] *my* priest.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 2. — **אֲשֶׁר לָקַח לָהּ**. **אֲ** is the *dat. incommodi*. Strictly speaking, **אֲ** simply marks some sort of relation, the exact nature of which must be otherwise determined. The present phrase, rendered as literally as possible, is: "which (sc. **הַכֶּסֶף**) was taken for thee," cf. our popular use of the same phrase, and the German, *welches dir genommen ward*. Ewald (who with characteristic self-confidence announces that he must leave the "silly absurdity" of the ordinary explanation of this passage "to those who do not hesitate to find their own folly in the Bible,") seems to take **אֲ** as the dative of the author: the money taken (received) by thee from my father. For he relates, quite in historical style, that a young man of Mount Ephraim, whose father probably died early, took the money which had been left to his mother into his own hands, in order by using to increase it (!); and that, followed by his mother's blessing, he was fortunate, and was about to restore the money to her, as became a dutiful son, when she made him a present of it in the shape of a handsome (*schmucken*) god, etc. The perfect **לָקַח**, he says, is the perfect of volition (like **הָקַדְשְׁתִּי**, ver. 3): "I will take; it is my will to take." But if the Hebrew author meant to tell this story, he expressed himself very obscurely. The imprecatory oath, too, is thus left without explanation. And notwithstanding all Ewald's efforts in behalf of him, Micah is still in suspicious possession of the money (**הַכֶּסֶף הַזֶּה**), before he tells his mother that he will take it. Under such circumstances, the benediction which, according to Ewald, the mother pronounces on her son, might be more politic than free.—**Tr.**]

[2 Ver. 3. — **הָקַדְשְׁתִּי**. Render: "I verily dedicate." Although Dr. Cassel also translates here by the pluperfect, he explains it of the present, see below. On this use of the perfect cf. *Ges. Gram.* 126, 4. The word "wholly" of the E. V. is better omitted. The infin. absolute in this construction is intensive, not extensive. It does not assert the completeness of the consecration, but simply makes it prominent, as being the use to which she determines to put the money. Cf. *Ges.* 131, 3.—**Tr.**]

[3 Ver. 3. — **כֶּסֶל וְצִפְּתָהּ**. Dr. Cassel: *Bild und Gusswerk*, "Image and cast-work"; i. e., an image of wood or stone covered with a thin coating of silver or gold, see below. This explanation, although concurred in by several critics, is not yet sufficiently certain to make it worth while to disfigure our English text by inserting it.—**Tr.**]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

After the story of Samson's heroic life and death, there follow in conclusion two narratives, of which the first embraces chaps. xvii. and xviii., the second chaps. xix.—xxi. Though not connected with each other either by time or place, they are nevertheless not mere accidental appendages to the preceding historical narrative, but essential parts of the well-considered organism of the entire Book, in consequence of which also they received the position in which we find them. The profound pragmatism of the Book (see Introduction, sect. 1) designs to show, that the heroic period of the Judges is full indeed of the wonders of God's compassion, but lacks that organic centralization and unity which only the kingly office, rightly instituted and rightly exercised, could afford. This want manifested itself even under the greatest Judges. The influence of the Judge extended, for the most part,

only over the individual tribes to which he belonged, while in others it was not seldom resisted; and, being wholly personal in its nature, disappeared from his house as soon as he died.

In chaps. xvii. and xviii. another lesson is brought forward, hints of which had already occurred in earlier parts of the Book. The religious central point of the nation, also, became unsettled. And this was the greater danger. The sanctuary at Shiloh, the law and covenant of God that were in the sacred ark, were the real pillars of Israel's nationality. The existence of this spiritual unity was brought out in the opening sentence of the Book: "And after the death of Joshua, the sons of Israel asked Jehovah." It had in dark times demonstrated itself to be the guaranty of national cohesion. The tribes were twelve, indeed, and their cities lay scattered from Beer-sheba to the source of the Jordan; but there was but one sanctuary where the God of Israel was inquired of. It an

peared, however, that the long-continued want of a closer political organization, threatened also the unity of the religious organism. For not only was the service of foreign idols introduced, threatening the nerve of popular strength and national freedom, but subjective superstition, also, and inconsiderate division, asserted themselves within the religious organization. This is shown by the story of Micah's sanctuary.

Ver. 1. And there was a man of mount Ephraim, and his name was Micayehu. Avarice, the Apostle tells us, is the root of all evil. Covetousness, like all sin, knows no shame. Its lustful eyes profane even that which is holy. The treasures of temples have ever excited the rapacity of savage enemies. The gifts of the pious convert houses of prayer into objects of envy. Faithful Israelites, who believed in Jehovah, went to Shiloh, in Ephraim, performed there their pious duties, inquired of God after truth, prayed, and brought their offerings for the honor and maintenance of the house of God. Among those who did this, was doubtless also the father of Micayehu. For that he confessed Jehovah, is evident from the

name which he gave to his son: מִיכָיְהוּ, "who is like Jehovah." Such names are only given in homes where Jehovah is honored, at least in appearance. The mere fact, however, that persons are named "Theodore,"<sup>1</sup> "Nathaniel," "Theophilus," or other like names, gives no assurance that they are what their names declare them to be. The father of Micayehu must also have been rich; for he left his widow large sums of money. The latter, according to all appearances, was avaricious; and it was probably on this account that true faith in Jehovah took no root in her heart, although the name of Jehovah was often on her lips.

Vers. 2, 3. Behold, here is the money; I took it. The rich woman had been deprived of a large sum of money. Eleven hundred shekels, at that time, evidently represented a very considerable amount; large enough to be spoken of in "round figures." The woman was beside herself; her soul was in her money; and so she cursed the thief. Cursing is still a frightful oriental custom. It was regarded as an invocation of judgments from heaven. Hence, the dread of the effects of curses, in heathenism, arose not only from faith, but still more from superstition. The sin was indeed engaged in, but the curse was dreaded; just as other thieves do not refrain from stealing, but guard themselves anxiously against the police. To this must be added that parental curses were feared as the heaviest of all bans (among the Greeks cf. Nägelsbach, *Nachhom. Theol.*, p. 350). Sirach (iii. 9) still said in his day, that "the curse of a mother overturns the houses of children." Micah heard the awful imprecations of his mother's malediction, and shuddered. He could not say, "a causeless curse takes no effect" (Prov. xxvi. 2). He had taken the money, which was now charged with his mother's curses. With these he will not have it. "Here is your money back," he says; "I took it." As one shakes off rain, so he would

free himself of this curse-laden money. "It is thy son," he says, "and his house, whom thou has cursed. Take the money—I do not wish it." His words, so far as we can see, express more of reproach than of consciousness of guilt. And the mother resembles those people of whom James says (ch. iii. 10): "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing." She had cursed, in inconsiderate wrath, and without investigation, on account of her lost money. That being recovered, she will save her son from the effects of her malediction. As if blessing and curse were under human control, she exclaims: "Blessed be thou, my son, unto Jehovah."

The son was in any case wrong in taking the money secretly. The purpose for which he took it, seems to be indicated by the context and the speech of the mother. He wished it for the purpose which he afterwards carried out. This also explains sufficiently why he took it secretly: he probably did not believe that his mother would approve his design. For the preparation of *peseh* and *massakah*, an image and cast-work, for the purpose he had in view, was itself a theft, notwithstanding that it looked like an act of service to God. But it turned out differently. It was natural that his mother should ask for what purpose he had taken it; and he replies that he had destined it for Jehovah, to fit out a private sanctuary with an image and cast-work. The mother, in order to appease him, says: then do I consecrate it for Jehovah, from my hand for my son (the formula of dedication), that he may make an "image and cast-work;"<sup>2</sup> now therefore take the money. Hereupon there arises a genuine contest of superstition. He is now afraid of the curse-laden money. And she is in dread lest the frustration of the seemingly religious end for which her son intended to use it, should fall back upon herself. He has excused his theft with the word "Jehovah;" and she seeks to cover up her curse with it. Superstition thus shows itself to be the worst profanation, transmuting eternal truth into subjective personal interest.

Ver. 4. And his mother took two hundred shekels of silver. Micah had once more refused the money. He still fears the curse that it may bring with it. Thereupon the mother causes the "image and cast-work" to be made; applying, however, not 1,100 shekels, but only 200. This shows that it was only avarice, and not the fact that she had dedicated the money to religious purposes, that had inspired her curse. For even now she cannot part with more than 200 shekels out of the 1,100. On the other hand, it becomes evident that the purpose for which Micah took the money was the manufacture of the image; for it is set up "in his house," and he combines with it still other operations.

Ver. 5. And he set up an ephod and teraphim. These words give the key to the whole transaction, and even afford a clue to the time in which it took place. The paternal house of Micah, it appears, had not openly broken with the service of Jehovah. This is clear from both his and his mother's words (vers. 2, 3, 13). But their hearts

<sup>1</sup> The priest who subsequently entered the service of Micah, was named "Jonathan," i. e., Theodore. See at ch. xviii. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Bertheau assumes that the mother devoted the money to this purpose, inasmuch as her son had already a *Beth Elolam*. But it was only the image that could make any house a "House of God." It is certainly more natural to suppose that, when he utterly refused to accept the money,

she took it upon herself to provide the image with the money in question, in order to deliver him from the curse. She can have come to this use of the money, only because he gave it as the object for which he took it. The mother applies only two hundred shekels; the opinion that the others were used by way of endowment is at least not indicated in the text.

were not wholly with God. This is evident from her avarice and malediction. There was not a house in which the Canaanitish Baal was sacrificed to; but neither was it one in which there was more of true religion than the form and name. In the house of Joash there stood, before Gideon destroyed it, an altar of Baal and an Asherah. That was not the case here. But selfishness and superstitious egoism are idolatrous in their nature and consequences, even when Jehovah, that is, the God of Israel, is still spoken of. What R. Juda Hallevi<sup>1</sup> says of Micah and others, applies especially to him: "He resembles a man who, while incestuously marrying his sister, should strictly observe the customary laws of marriage." He makes use of the name of God, but for that which is vanity (שָׁוְיָהּ, Ex. xx. 7). "He made an ephod." The sin of which he was thus guilty, lay not in the ephod, but in the fact that he set it up. The ephod was designed for the lawful priesthood. The Urim and Thummim were intended for Israel's high-priests (Ex. xxviii. 30), in order that by means of them they might be the constant organ of objective divine wisdom for the whole people, at the place where they served before God. Hence, they neither could nor ought to serve the subjective interests of individual men or tribes, or be inquired of anywhere else than when the priest was who bore them on his heart. This fact also renders the meaning of Judg. viii. 27 clear, where it is related that after Gideon had set up an ephod with the golden booty obtained from the Midianites, all Israel went a-whoring after it, and found a snare in it. Gideon, it is true, served Jehovah sincerely and truly, and meant only that his ephod should serve as a reminder to the people of the wonderful deeds of God; but in setting it up, he nevertheless introduced a precedent which subjective superstition misused to its own hurt. For, inasmuch as he set it up in his own house, he gave occasion for others to think that they also might do the same in their houses. The deeds in consequence of which he instituted the ephod were soon lost sight of; and the eye was directed only to the money out of which it proceeded. It may be assumed that precisely for Micah Gideon's example proved a source of danger, — for which, however, the blame falls not on the hero, but on Micah. We thus obtain a clew to the time in which the event here related occurred. Micah was a man of Ephraim who lived not long after the days of Gideon. There was pride enough in Ephraim to arrogate to itself the right of doing what was done, however grandly and nobly, in the smaller tribe of Manasseh. It is at all times the practice of paltry selfishness to dishonor the extraordinary actions of great men, by using them as cloaks for their own mean ends. Gideon destroyed the altar of Baal secretly, and for this purpose made use of his father's people and means without his father's knowledge. Micah probably excused himself by this example, when he secretly took his mother's money, in order to set up that which in his own interest he destined for God.

The anarchy of arbitrary individualism exhibits itself very strikingly here, in the fact that a mere common man (אִישׁ, ver. 1), without name

or merit, has the presumption to do the same thing which Gideon, the Judge and Deliverer of Israel, had undertaken to do; and that he does it on the same mountains of Ephraim on which, at no great distance, in Shiloh, the ark of God and the lawful ephod were to be found. R. Nathan<sup>2</sup> thinks that the places were so near to each other, that the smoke from both sanctuaries might commingle, as it rose upward. A mere common man, who had nothing but money, presumed to found a sanctuary, with an ephod and a priest, and to pass this off as an oracle of Jehovah. The object he had in view can hardly have been any other than to ensnare the people who, in the pressure of their religious needs, sought for instruction, and brought votive offerings and gifts. For this purpose, the house which he founded must have been assimilated to the tabernacle; yet not so completely as to be attractive only to the thoroughly pious worshippers of Jehovah. For as these would not under any circumstances visit any sanctuary but that at Shiloh, Micah's house would then have failed of its purpose. It could be made attractive only by making it minister to the superstition of sensual worship, and by vesting this ministry in the forms of the service of Jehovah. Hence he speaks of consecration to Jehovah, but at the same time represents the latter by means of פָּסֶל וּמַצֵּכָה (an image and cast-work). He set up an ephod, and supplemented it with teraphim. He needed a priest; and in the absence of a Levite, he himself selects one of his sons for the office. Every part of his proceeding is thus marked by subjective arbitrariness, which under pious names concealed self-interest and superstition. The narrator strikingly points out this his sin, by means of a few delicate strokes. Hitherto the man had always been called Micavehu, distinctly hearing the name of Jehovah. But from ver. 5, where he sets up his sanctuary, onward, he is only spoken of as Micah. The name of God was not to be desecrated in him. And although Micah speaks of "Jehovah" (v. 13), his house is only called a *Beth Elohim*, — a name also given to the temples of heathen deities, — not *Beth Jehovah*, house of Jehovah. No description is given of what the goldsmith shaped out of the mother's two hundred pieces of money; but it is called פָּסֶל וּמַצֵּכָה, an image and cast-work. These words at the same time pronounce judgment against the sin that had been committed, for they are the technical expressions under which the law forbids the making of every kind of image-work for idolatrous purposes. The narrator has his eye doubtless on Deut. xxvii. 15: "Cursed (אֲרֵרָה) is the man that maketh פָּסֶל וּמַצֵּכָה, an abomination unto Jehovah, the work of the hands of the artificer." He intimates, assuredly, that the same man who stood in such dread of his mother's curse on the thief of her money, rendered himself obnoxious to the more awful curse of the divine law, when he desired, or at any rate accepted, such image-work. The form of the image cannot, however, be determined with certainty. The opinion that it represented a calf, is certainly not tenable. It is not true that Jehovah, the God of Israel, was ever or anywhere represented under

<sup>1</sup> *Kuzari*, iv. 14, ed. Cassel, p. 335.

<sup>2</sup> The Talmud, *Sanhedrin*, 108 b, calls the name of the place where Micah lived, גֵּרָב, and puts it at a distance of three מֵיל from Shiloh. So far as the name is con-

cerned, it appears to be only a name of reproach, with a reference to Deut. xxviii. 27; Lev. xxi. 20. In *Pesachim* 117 a, the place seems to be named בְּכִי [*Retus, ploratus*], probably in pursuance of a similar homiletical explanation



the figure of a bull or calf. On the contrary, this figure was symbolical of a contrast, a national and historical contrast, with Jehovah. This appears both from the golden calf of the desert and from the history of Jeroboam.<sup>1</sup> To infer from the analogy of the latter, that Micah also cast a calf, would likewise be erroneous. For Micah's act has no national, but only a religious significance. He does not intend to set up a contrast to Jehovah, but only a superstitious syncretism with other sanctuaries. Had the image been a calf, the narrator would have taken occasion to say so; for that of itself, in its relation to the idolatry of the desert, would have indicated the nature of Micah's sin. Since it must be assumed that Micah intended to establish a sort of tabernacle, it is to be supposed that in his image-work also he carried out this imitation to the extreme of superstition.

In the tabernacle, on the *פִּנְקֵת* ["mercy-seat"] there were two cherubim, with outspread wings; and in Ex. xxv. 22, God says: "I will speak with thee from upon the *kapporeth* [mercy-seat], from between the two cherubim." Now, if Micah, while in general imitating this arrangement, transformed the cherubim into sphinx-like figures, such as were found in Egyptian temples, and symbolized (as Clem. Alex., *Strom.* lib. v. ch. 5, well explains,) the mysterious problems concerning the Deity, which received their solution at the hands of the priests, he would at the same time minister to the superstition of the time. And it was especially the establishment of an oracle that Micah had in view. The verb *פָּסַל* means to cut, to chisel, especially in wood, to carve; for the image, *פִּסְלָא*, can be burnt (Deut. vii. 5, 25), or sawed

in pieces (Deut. xii. 3). *מִסְכָּה* is the coating of gold with which the image was covered (cf. Ewald, *Altorthümer*, p. 256, 2d edit.), and is therefore oftenest mentioned in connection with *pesel*, but frequently also without it. Such wooden images (called *ξόανα*, by the Greeks), says K. O. Müller (*Archäologie*, § 69), were adorned with chaplets and diadems, neck-chains, and ear-pendants. To this the lawgiver refers, when he says (Deut. vii. 25): "The images of their gods ye shall burn with fire; thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them." Beside the ephod Micah also made *teraphim*. This addition shows that he designed the ephod for divining purposes. The subject of the teraphim has hitherto remained enveloped in a great deal of obscurity. From Ezek. xxi. 26 (21), 2 Kgs. xxiii. 24, and Hos. iii. 4, (cf. also 1 Sam. xv. 23), it is certain that they were consulted, like oracles. They were shaped like human beings, see 1 Sam. xix. 13; and they were small, otherwise Rachel could not have concealed them (Gen. xxxi. 34). Antiquity conceived of every thing connected with divination as wrapped in darkness and mystery. The heathen oracle issued out of the depth and darkness in enigmatic language.

<sup>1</sup> Cf my treatise, *Jeroboam*, Erf. 1856. Unfortunately, Keil also thinks that this opinion is "scarcely to be doubted," although he adduces no grounds for it. For that the term *פִּסְלָא*, in Ex. xxxii. 4, is also followed by

*מִסְכָּה*, is as natural as it is that this latter word is always found whenever cast images are spoken of. Cf. Ex. xxxiv. 17. The error is so widespread that it has even found a place in the reply of Thomas (*Union, Kath. Kirche*, p. 40), to Stahl's book on "Union." [On this question of the

At Megara, there was an oracle of the goddess Night, represented as a high and closely veiled figure. The little teraphim also must have borne about them tokens of their mysterious nature. We may venture to recognize them in the little shapes of Greek art, enveloped in a thick mantle and hat, who constantly accompany the figures of Æsculapius, the divining god of the healing art (where also the tablets usually appear, symbolic of the responses of the god. Müller, *Archäol.*, § 394, 1). Among the various names given to these attendant figures by the Greeks, is that of Telesphoros, end-bringing.<sup>2</sup> It is well known that oracles were most frequently consulted with reference to physical ailments. In Israel, also, in days of apostasy, idols were applied to for healing (2 Kgs. i. 2). The teraphim, accordingly, appear to represent oracles of healing. Their name, at all events, Teraphim (trophim), approximates closely to that of Trophonius,<sup>3</sup> for which also the Greek language affords no suitable etymology. Trophonius is the healing oracle, who delivered his responses in a dark chasm, and who, like Æsculapius, is represented with a serpent, from which he probably derived his name (cf. *פְּתָרָה*). The relationship of teraphim and "seraphim" is plain enough. The serpent-divination of Greece is manifestly of Asiatic origin. That the Israelites offered incense to the healing serpent erected by Moses, we learn from the history of Hezekiah, who destroyed it (2 Kgs. xviii. 4). The teraphim, then, explain themselves and some other matters, when we regard them as Telesphoroi, possessed of oracular healing attributes. Every passage in which they appear is in this way fully explained.

Ver. 6. In those days there was no king in Israel. There was no central civil authority, that could interpose against sin and its seductive arts. The sentence teaches that in Israel it was considered the office of the king, not to allow such arbitrariness and sin as those of Micah to assert themselves. It was regarded as a mark of anarchy, when, alongside of the sanctuary at Shiloh, a common man took it upon himself to seduce the people into superstition. It must, however, be said, that even though the worship of God in Shiloh was strong enough to face such dangers, it is nevertheless presumptively a sign of weakness in the contemporary ministers of that worship, that Micah had the courage to do as he did. The complaint of our verse is made, because in reality Micah sinned against the very foundations of the Mosaic faith and law. It is not the freedom which permitted a man to have a chapel of his own, that is lamented; but the license which enabled him to fit out an idol-temple, to establish an oracle, and arbitrarily to disfigure the genuine national cultus. For the rest, the utterance is one that could be made only when the kingly office was either expected to exhibit or had exhibited, its efficiency in protecting the law in its purity. It was possible only until the most flourishing point of Solomon's

meadow of calf-idols in Israel, cf. Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, art. "Calf." — Ta.]

<sup>2</sup> It is only by the gift of foretelling limit and end, from amid concealment and mystery, that the nature and symbol of the Telesphoroi can be explained; and only thus can a connection between them and the sages of telephoria, of which Büchli speaks, be allowed. It is only their connection with the teraphim that explains both these and them. This fact escaped both Preller (*Griech. Myth.*, i. 827) and Welcker (*Griech. Myth.*, ii. 740).

<sup>3</sup> Whose connection with Serapis and Saraph is to be more minutely explained elsewhere.



reign, and probable only in the times when men were seeking a king to remedy the prevalent anarchy.

Vers. 7-12. And there was a Levite. Micah probably found that his sanctuary lacked consideration, because it had no priest. There were priests enough in Ephraim, to be sure; but it would seem that none of them were willing to serve him — which redounds to their honor. Assistance came to him, however, from another quarter. A young man, who according to rule was settled in Judah (*בְּמִשְׁפַּחַת יְהוּדָה*, cf. Josh. xxi. 4), became discontented at home, and took to travelling about, after the manner of a scholar in the Middle Ages. He stopped some time in Bethlehem, but left that place also; and on his way over the mountains of Ephraim, he came to Micah. The position of Micah's sanctuary must have been a favorable one, near the high-ways from south to north; for the Danites, who came from Eshtaol and Zorah, and the young Levite, who came from Bethlehem, passed by it. Micah, hearing that the Levite was unengaged, proposed to him to take service with himself. The proposition was made sufficiently inviting. The young man was to be honored as "a father" (*אב*, *pater*), become a priest, and be placed in good circumstances. Vanity, and the offer of a good place led the young Levite astray, — and he was not the last who fell thus. He forgot who he was (see at ch. xviii. 30), and whom as Levite he ought to serve, and consented (*וַיֵּשֶׁב*, cf. on ch. i. 27). Micah took him in with great joy; so that, even beyond his promises, he received him as "one of

his sons," — an expression which stands in suggestive contrast with Micah's promise to regard him "as a father." For the sake of money, the Levite submitted to be "consecrated, ordained," by an Ephraimite. (The words *וַיִּמְשָׁךְ* *וַיִּמְשָׁךְ* are a standing expression for to induct, to ordain. The expression is derived (as Ex. xxix. 33 compared with ver. 24 clearly shows), from the ceremony of laying the offerings required at the consecration of a priest upon his hands, *עַל כַּפָּי*, Ex. xxix. 24). At all events, Micah valued the Levitical dignity more highly than the Levite himself did. When the latter had entered his house, he exclaimed: —

Ver. 13. Now know I that Jehovah will do me good, seeing the Levite has become my priest. These words indicate most strikingly, the thorough self-deception of the man. He looks for blessings to Jehovah, against whom he has committed the mortal sin of image-worship. He expects these blessings on account of a Levite, who did wrong when he allowed himself to be hired. He who sets up ephod and teraphim for the enlightenment of others, has himself so little insight into the spirit of truth as not to perceive that in the falsehood of his entire establishment its downfall is already assured. Perhaps, he also found pleasure in the descent of his Levite (ch. xviii. 30), although it ought rather to have frightened him. But self-love blinds him, and his soiled conscience builds hopes on the name of a Levite, whose doings in his house challenged the judgments of God. "Now know I," he exclaims. He will soon learn how deceptive this knowing is.

*The tribe of Dan, desirous of more room, despatches explorers. These, after spending a night near Micah's religious establishment, become aware of its existence, and consult its oracle. Proceeding, they find at Laish an inviting place, easy of conquest. They return home, and a colony of six hundred families is sent out.*

## CHAPTER XVIII. 1-13.

- 1 In those days *there was* no king in Israel: and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day *all their* [no] inheritance<sup>1</sup> had not [omit: not] fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel.
- 2 And the children [sons] of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts [of their whole number], men of valour, from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it; and they said unto them, Go, search the land: who when [and] they came to mount Ephraim, to [as far as] the house of Micah, [and] they
- 3 lodged there. When they *were* by the house of Micah, they knew the voice<sup>2</sup> of the young man the Levite: and they turned in thither, and said unto him, Who brought thee hither? and what makest [doest] thou in this *place*? and what hast
- 4 thou here? And he said unto them, Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and
- 5 hath [he] hired me, and I am [became] his priest. And they said unto him, Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go
- 6 shall be prosperous. And the priest said unto them, Go in peace: before the Lord
- 7 [Jehovah] is your way wherein ye go. Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw the people that *were* therein, how they dwelt<sup>3</sup> careless [securely],

after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and *there was* no magistrate [potentate] in the land, that might put *them* to shame [injure them] in *any* thing and they *were* far from the Zidonians, and had no business with *any* man [had no intercourse with other men]. And they came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eshtaol: and their brethren said unto them, What *say* ye? And they said, Arise, that we may [and let us] go up against them: for we have seen the land, and behold, it *is* very good: and *are* ye still? be not slothful to go, and to enter [come] to possess the land. When ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure, and to a large land: for God hath given it into your hands; a place where *there is* no want of any thing that *is* in the earth [land]. And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred men appointed [girded] with weapons of war. And they went up, and pitched [encamped] in Kirjath-jearim, in Judah: wherefore they called [call] that place Mahaneh-dan [Camp of Dan] unto this day: behold, *it is* behind Kirjath-jearim. And they passed thence unto mount Ephraim, and came unto [as far as] the house of Micah.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 1. — בְּנִחְלָה properly means: "in the character of an inheritance, as an inheritance," cf. Num. xxvi. 53, etc. The nominative to לְאִנְכַּלָּה is to be supplied from the thought of the preceding clause, either in the form of בְּנִחְלָה, or, better, in the more general form of אֲרָץ, land. The writer probably intended to introduce the subject after the verb, but as he proceeded his attention was diverted by subordinate clauses, and so he ended with an anacoluthon. — Tr.]

[2 Ver. 3. — קוֹל. Dr. Cassel renders "sound," see his explanation below. Keil and others understand it of dialectic pronunciation or other peculiarities of speech. Bertheau thinks that inasmuch as the envoys had to "turn aside" from their way in order to get to Micah's temple, they could not have been near enough to hear the Levite's voice or note his pronunciation. He therefore assumes that what they recognized was the "tidings" that were told them of the sanctuary near by. But why not take the words in the sense in which any man would naturally take them at the first reading? The Levite had been a wanderer; some one (or more) of the five envoys had met with him, and now recognize his voice, as they lie encamped near by. The conversation that ensues when they meet with him is certainly exactly such as would be expected under such circumstances; and the account which Micah gives of his personal affairs (ver. 4), can scarcely be explained on any other supposition. — Tr.]

[3 Ver. 7. — יוֹשֶׁבֶת is predicate to אֶרֶץ-הָעָם, and as such ought to be masculine. The feminine is accounted for on the principle that the writer's imagination identifies the people with the city in which they live, and so speaks of them as feminine, cf. Ewald, *Lehrb.* 174 b; Green, *Gram.* 275, 2, h. The appositional masculine participles שָׁקַט וְבָטַח only show that this identification is no longer in the mind of the writer. — Tr.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 1. In those days there was no king in Israel. This is repeated in order to intimate that the author does not approve of what he is about to relate concerning the Danites. Such a piratical expedition was possible only when there was no organic national authority to guard the public peace and watch over the enforcement of law. The kingly office is a guaranty of the safety of property and of the continuance of public peace, and does not permit adventurous expeditions, undertaken for the injury of others. These very evils, however, were prevalent in Germany, notwithstanding imperial rule; and that not only in the Middle Ages. It was a matter of great difficulty, in the fourteenth century, to bring about the formation of local peace-compacts; and even then they had inserted in them the clause of the Westphalian treaty of 1371, according to which a city or lord was only forbidden to engage in hostilities without a previous declaration of war. Even this principle would have condemned the Danites, it is true, but the organic government in the interests of peace and order which Israel understood by מְלִכְוּת, kingdom, royal dominion, had no existence in Germany, even until after the thirty years' war.

For that unto that day no inheritance had fallen unto them. These words do not express

the view of the narrator, but rehearse the complaint of the Danites, which was causeless however. Dan had certainly received an inheritance; and in proof of it is the fact that even at this time the tribe dwelt in the district of Zorah and Eshtaol. Its territory extended over Timnah and Ekron, as far as Joppa on the coast (Josh. xix. 41–46); but it had been crowded into the mountains by the Amorites (Judg. i. 34), and had failed to dispossess the Philistines of the plain along the sea-coast. On this account the tribe might indeed have too narrow bounds; but instead of enlarging their borders by making war on their heathen neighbors, they complained. If they had not been lacking in the true enthusiasm of faith in Jehovah, their onsets of irresistible prowess would not have failed to win the territory allotted to them. But it was easier, it must be allowed, to surprise undefended houses and lands, than to contend with the five princes of the Philistines, and their numerous armies. The words before us are only the subterfuge with which Dan defended the unusual resolution it had taken before the other tribes.

Ver. 2. And the sons of Dan sent of their family five men. Only in Israel was it an unusual thing to look about for other possessions than those which had been assigned. Among other nations, the reduction of a too numerous population by means of colonization, was a matter of frequent occurrence (cf. Movers, *Phönizier*, iii. 5, etc.). In

the case of Dan, however, the resolution to look about for new territory was not arrived at by a few adventurers, who unceremoniously cut themselves loose from their people, but by the whole community. The commissioners and envoys to whom the promotion of the scheme was entrusted, were elected from among the whole (מְקַיְוֹרִים) and were not ordinary spies, but chosen men (אֲנָשֵׁי חַיִּל), upon whom the matter naturally devolved. (Compare the Roman plan of appointing commissioners to supervise the establishment of a colony.) The express statement that they were told "Go, explore the land," is added, in order to relieve them from every appearance of having acted only on their own responsibility.

Vers. 3, 4. There, near the house of Micah, they recognized the sound. "There" (שָׁם),<sup>1</sup> i. e., in the vicinity of the "temple-house," which is here, in a special sense, called the "house of Micah."

When they were near this house (עַתִּידֵיכֶם), they heard the "sound" (קוֹל) of the young Levite." This has been curiously enough understood of the voice of the Levite. But how could the Danites tell by the voice that it belonged to a Levite? The statement, however, becomes instructive, when we call to mind what is written in Ex. xxviii. 35. The Levite in Micah's House wore the priestly dress, which was provided with bells, in order "that their sound may be heard (קוֹל) when he enters into and comes out of the Holy Place."

The Danites, having passed the night (לַיְלָה), heard, in the morning, the bells of the officiating priest, and thus learned, to their astonishment, that there was a Levite there.

Vers. 5, 6. Inquire, we pray thee, of God (Elohim). The Danites, it is evident from all they do, are not steadfast in their faith in Jehovah. Hence, also, they find no fault with the Levite for having "hired" himself to Micah; nor do they hesitate, when they learn that he has an ephod and teraphim (ver. 14), to consult his oracle about the success of their undertaking; but that Jehovah was worshipped here, did not appear to them to be the case. The narrator indicates this very delicately, by making them say, "Inquire of Elohim," although the Levite, in the account he gave of himself, had used the name Jehovah, for to his service Micah's House was nominally devoted. The Levite's response is oracular, i. e., thoroughly ambiguous: "Go in peace: לָכֵן הַיּוֹם בְּרָכָבָם is simply equivalent to *coram*: no such accessory idea as "favorable," lies in the words. "Your way is before Jehovah"—an answer unquestionably correct. The Danites probably explained it in a favorable sense, on account of the "go in peace" which preceded it.

Ver 7. And the five went, and came to Laish. Since the city was afterwards called Dan, whose name and situation at one of the sources of the Jordan (and that not the spring at Baniâs), was known in the time of Josephus, Robinson was doubtless right in saying (*B. R.* iii. 392), that "of the identity of its situation and that of Tell el-Kâdy there can be no question." Ritter (xv. 217) even communicates Wilson's observation, accord-

ing to which the name Dan, i. e., judge, survives by translation in Kâdy, the surname of the Tell Laish, however, lay "in the valley that leads to Beth-rehob" (ver. 28). This valley can scarcely be any other than the present Wady et-Teim, the great longitudinal valley which extends from the plain of Lake Hûleh upward to Râsheiya. Through this valley and the Buka'a runs the direct road from the sources of the Jordan to Hamath (*Rob.* iii. 371). The spies of Moses explored the land as far as Rehob, where the road leads to Hamath (*Num.* xiii. 21). Rehob (prop. Rechob) is a name suggested by topographical characteristics, and recurs therefore in various places. It always presupposes the presence of a plain or level surface.<sup>2</sup> It is to be noted that Scripture itself does not speak of either Dan or Laish, as situated at the sources of the Jordan. We may, nevertheless, venture the conjecture that this situation may be found indicated in the name Laish (לַיִשׁ). Laish signifies a lion; and ancient, originally Egyptian, symbology, has made the lion the sign of flowing stream-sources. For as soon as the sun enters his sign in the zodiac, the sources of the Nile begin to rise. Hence, says Horapollo, the mouths of fountains are provided with the figures of lions. This also accounts for the statement of Pollux, that the lion is called κρηνοφόρος, "guardian of springs," and for the wide-extended usage of setting up figures of the lion near springs. The place of the source of the Orontes is named Lebweh, which also means lion. The river which rises near Baalbek-Heliopolis was called Leontes (at present Litâny); and the lion himself, as Egyptian symbol, signified "House of the Sun." On the front-side of a building over the spring of Ain 'Anûb there are found figures of animals, considered to be either lions or dogs (*Ritter*, xvii. 676). The name Laish may be supposed to indicate in a similar manner the fountain, "one of the largest in the world," which leaps down in an "immense stream" from Tell el-Kâdy (*Rob.* iii. 390). We are reminded by it of the blessing of Moses (*Dent.* xxxiii. 22): "And of Dan he said, Dan is a לֵוִיָּהּ (lion's whelp); he leaps forth from Bashan." The attribute thus expressed corresponds, as it were, to that indicated in the name Laish. Leshem, the name under which the place appears in Josh. xix. 47, gives literal expression, perhaps, to the same idea which was figuratively indicated by Laish. The verb לָשַׁע, to break through (of a spring), to flow, belongs to an ancient and widely diffused root. Hence, as the source of the Jordan was called לַיִשׁ, so the warm springs near the Dead Sea were called לֵשָׁה, Leshah, changed afterwards into Callirrhoe (cf. *lehkan, Liens, Lech, Celtic, Leis, Lias*, and numerous similar river names).

Ver. 7. There was no hereditary potentate in the land, to oppress them in any respect. The observations of the five envoys are remarkable. They find the city, as a colony of Sidon, quietly devoted to industrial arts, after the manner of the mother city. It had not entered into relations for mutual protection with other cities, probably on the ground of its being a colony. That notwithstanding this, it could feel itself secure, and live without much warlike vigilance,

<sup>1</sup> [Our author, both in his version of the Hebrew text and here, transfers לָכֵן from the end of one verse to the beginning of another, but without good reason. — Ta.]

<sup>2</sup> On Rehob, equivalent to Paltos, compare above, on Judg. i. 81.

although Sidon was so far away, evinces the very peaceful condition of the Syria of that day. The envoys observe also, that "there is no **יֹרֵשׁ עָצָר** in the land." The expression is obscure by reason of its uncommonness. It seems to me, that it can only be understood in this way: The Danite envoys, during their stay in Laish, investigate particularly the ability of the city to defend itself. In this investigation they find not only that the people are engaged in peaceful industry (**שָׁלוֹם**), while their natural allies are far away, but also that there is no **יֹרֵשׁ עָצָר**, i. e., no dynast or tyrant, in the land, with armed troops in his pay, ready for war. The presence of such a one would make it necessary to anticipate serious and ready resistance. Hence, the Persians, when they took possession of Ionia, deposed the tyrants and instituted popular governments everywhere (Herod. vi. 43).

Under the **יֹרֵשׁ עָצָר** of our passage, we are to understand what the Greeks called dynasts, hereditary despots, who exercised supreme control in the city. There is no thought here of a king or of suffetes, but of a tyrannical oppressor, who without consent of the inhabitants has become their master, and who surrounds himself with armed troops, in order, as instances in both Greek and Phœnician islands and cities sufficiently prove, to preserve the succession to this sort of government in his own family by means of force. In this explanation, **עָצָר** may either be taken as the object

after **יֹרֵשׁ**, in the sense of enforced supremacy, — in which case 1 Sam. ix. 17 may be compared, for **עָצָר** is indeed, both in letter and sense, the Latin *arcere*, and sometimes also equivalent to *coercere*; or it may be regarded as standing in subjective opposition to **יֹרֵשׁ**, and be compared with **עָצָר**

= **אֶרֶס**, lord, commander (cf. the Sanskrit *çira*), in the Aramaic names Nebuchadnezzar and Esarhaddon (cf. my *Ortsnamen*, i. 118). Since such a *Joresch-elsar* wields his power by violence and without the consent of his subjects, it is not said that

none such "reigns" in the land, but **אֵין מֶלֶךְ לֵיהֶם**, none such "injures, oppresses."<sup>1</sup> But for defense against attacks from without, such a ruler is undoubtedly well adapted, as may be seen in the instance of Polyocrates. The envoys, therefore, are right, when they consider the absence of such a commander, where powerful friends are far away, and military activity is altogether wanting, as favorable to the success of an assailant.

Vers. 8-10. And they said, Arise, and let us go up against them. The narrative allows ancient manners to speak for themselves in a very delicate way. The five envoys, on their arrival at home, keep quiet, until they are asked, What have ye? Then, however, they are the ones who stimulate the irresolute and doubtful: "why are you silent? be not slothful **לֹא תִשָּׁן**, **לָבוֹא**, **לְלָכֶת**," for to go, to come, and to have what you desire, is one and the same thing. You will find an attrac-

tive country without defense, a large land, to which nothing (either of wealth or attractiveness) is wanting. This representation was not extravagant. Laish was situated in the valley, perhaps on the same spot afterwards occupied by the Daphne mentioned by Josephus; which name, in the Hellenistic period, was only given to attractively situated places. Accordingly, Josephus himself also speaks of his Daphne as a delicious place, rich in water-springs (*Wars*, iv. 1, 1). The tract of land in which it lay, is still called Ard Difeh, and is covered with glorious wheat-fields and noble old trees (Rob. iii. 394). The emigrating Messenians were in similar manner invited by Anaxilaus of Rhegium to make themselves masters of Zankle in Sicily, being told that it was a blessed land, and in a fine part of the island (Paus. iv. 23). Seneca remarks (*Consolatio ad Helviam matrem*, cap. vi.), that many emigrants have been deceived by unmeasured praises of the fertile territory.

The envoys, in order to strengthen their people add that "Elohim has given the land into their hands," referring probably to the response of the Levite's oracle.

Ver. 11. And there broke up from thence six hundred men, girded with weapons of war. Six hundred families either volunteered, or were selected. The number may correspond with ancient usage. Livy relates that the Romans, when engaged in a colonizing enterprise, in the year 197 before Christ, sent out three hundred families into each several city (xxxii. 29). The Danites, like Greek and Roman colonies, set out as if for war, with banners, arms, and means of subsistence (ver. 21). In a speech of Demosthenes it is said: *ἑλάμβανον πεμπόμενοι ὅπλα ἐκ τοῦ δημοσίου καὶ ἐφόδια* (cf. Hermann, *Griech. Staatsalterthümer*, § 75, 2).

Ver. 12. Wherefore that place is called "Camp of Dan," unto this day: behold, it is behind Kirjath-jearim. The expedition was at that time an extraordinary event. It seemed to renew the old marches of Israel in the desert, for the conquest of Canaan. There doubtless existed notices concerning the various stations which they made on the journey. It seems, however, that only three of the stations are known to us. The first was the "Machaneh Dan," with which the first awakening of Samson to his life of heroism was connected (ch. xiii. 25). It lay between Zorah and Eshtaol, and was therefore doubtless the place of rendezvous for the expedition, which came for the most part from those cities (ver. 11, cf. ver. 2). This cannot be the same with the Machaneh Dan near Kirjath-jearim, in the tribe of Judah, of which mention is here made. The researches of Robinson enable us to locate the latter near the modern Kuryet el-'Enab, whence the high road appears to have gone over the mountains of Ephraim. The third is the sanctuary of Micah, where likewise the "camping-place of Dan" was probably long remembered. At all events, the remark, that since this expedition the name Machaneh Dan existed, shows that the event took place before the days of Samson (during which Dan appears also to have been in an enfeebled condition), and is therefore to be put between Gideon and Samson.

<sup>1</sup> [Keil's explanation of this passage is in all essential points very similar, except that he defines **יֹרֵשׁ עָצָר** as "one who seizes on power," and derives (rightly, no

doubt) **יֹרֵשׁ** from **יָרַשׁ** in the sense of seizing, and not as our author does, in the sense of "inheriting," or rather, perhaps, in both senses at the same time. — Ta.]

*The Danites, on the way to Laish, pillage the sanctuary of Micah, and persuade hi priest to go with them. Micah pursues, but finding the robbers too strong, turns back. The conquest and destruction of Laish, and the building of Dan.*

## CHAPTER XVIII. 14-31.

14 Then answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish, and said unto their brethren, Do ye know that there is in these houses an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? now therefore consider what ye  
15 have to do. And they turned thitherward, and came to the house of the young man the Levite, *even* unto [omit: unto] the house of Micah, and saluted him.  
16 And the six hundred men appointed [girded] with their weapons of war, which  
17 *were* of the children [sons] of Dan,<sup>1</sup> stood by the entering of the gate. And the five men that went to spy out the land went up, *and* came in thither [entered the "house"], *and* took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image: and the priest stood in the entering of the gate with the six hundred men *that were* appointed [girded] with weapons of war. And these went [when these had gone] into Micah's house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. [.] Then [then] said the priest  
18 unto them, What do ye? And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest: *Is it* better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a  
19 tribe and a family in Israel? And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the  
20 people. So they turned and departed, and put the little ones, and the cattle, and  
21 the carriage [baggage] before them. *And* when they were a good way from the house of Micah,<sup>2</sup> the men that *were* in the houses near to Micah's house were  
22 gathered together, and overtook the children [sons] of Dan. And they cried [called out] unto the children [sons] of Dan. And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth [What is the matter with] thee, that thou comest  
23 with such a company? And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: and what have I more? and what *is* this  
24 *that* ye say unto me, What aileth [is the matter with] thee? And the children [sons] of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows [men fierce of spirit] run [fall] upon thee, and thou lose [destroy] thy  
25 life, with [and] the lives of thy household [house]. And the children [sons] of Dan went their way: and when [omit: when] Micah saw that they *were* too strong for him [stronger than he]. [and] he turned and went back unto his house.  
26 And they took *the things* which Micah had made, and the priest which he had, and came unto [upon] Laish, unto [upon] a people *that were* at [omit: that were at] quiet and secure: and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the  
27 city with fire. And *there was* no deliverer, because it [*i. e.*, the city,] *was* far from Zidon, and they had no business with *any* man [*i. e.*, no intercourse with other people]; and it [the city] was in the valley that *lieth* by [extends to] Beth-rehob. And they  
28 built a [the] city, and dwelt therein. And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel: howbeit the name  
29 of the city *was* Laish at the first. And the children [sons] of Dan set up the graven image [for themselves]: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh [Moses], he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day  
30 of the captivity of the land.<sup>3</sup> And they set them up Micah's graven image which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 16. — מִבְּנֵי דָן. The unusual position of this clause, separated from the words to which it belongs, may be explained by supposing that at the end of the sentence it occurred to the author that his language might possibly be understood of six hundred men stationing themselves to guard the temple, and prohibit the approach of the Danites, and that he obviates this by adding the present clause. The E. V. places the words where according to the sense they belong. — Tr.]

[2 Ver. 22. — הִצִּיחַ הַרְחִיקוּ מִבֵּית מִיכָה: "they had just withdrawn from the house of Micah, when the men," etc. So Dr Cassel, but not so well as the E. V. The verb הַרְחִיקוּ properly requires a complemental infinitive, לִלְכֹּת, cf. Ex. viii. 24, but is frequently also, as here, used without it. — Tr.]

[3 Ver. 30. — Dr. Cassel adopts here the conjectural reading "ark" instead of "land;" and it certainly seems that if criticism is ever justified in resorting to conjecture, it is so in this passage. See the discussion below. — Tr.]

#### EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 14. Do ye know that there is in these houses an ephod, teraphim, and image and cast-work? The five men who had reconnoitered Laish, accompany the colony, and form the soul of the whole undertaking. This is manifestly not conceived and carried out in the spirit of the God of Israel. The Danites present us with a military expedition, reckless and violent, such as the history of migrations and conquests is full of. Their road leads them over the mountains, and past the House of Micah. What houses are those? ask the

Danites. And their guides inform them (וַיֹּצִיאוּ, for the question is only presupposed), that here there is a private sanctuary, fully provided with everything necessary to such an institution. No Roman colony was sent forth without the authority of taking auspices, or without an attendant *pullarius*. The Danite envoys had asked the priest concerning the mind of Elohim, and had communicated his favorable answer to their brethren. The need of an oracle of their own becomes strongly felt by these warriors, who take the field from wholly subjective motives. The people have not left their hereditary landed possessions in order to lose themselves in a strange land, but to preserve their tribe-consciousness. This consciousness was alive in them, however, only so far as its national character went. They remember Dan, their ancestor, but not Jehovah, their God. They were not unbelieving, but superstitious; and superstition is subjective. It desires to be helped by Elohim, but it has no penitence, so as to serve Jehovah. The Danites desire to have a deity of their own, to direct them by his responses; and think that they can steal him, as gold and property may be stolen. Before Jehovah they could not stand with the thoughts of robbery and death that fill their hearts; but in these houses, they hear, there is an image and cast-work, ephod and teraphim. They conclude to conquer for their future city its appropriate temple service also.

Vers. 15-20. And they came to the house of the young man the Levite, the house of Micah. The manner in which the robbery is accomplished is vividly and beautifully portrayed. The five leaders are, of course, acquainted with the Levite from their former visit. They were also acquainted with the situation. They go to him, and greet him. The priest recognizes them, and permits them, the five, to enter the sanctuary. He himself remains at the gate, where the six hundred, in their warlike array, have placed themselves, while the families, the cattle, and the rest of the train, are already moving off. The five, being alone in the temple, take all its treasures, image and image adornments, ephod and teraphim (another proof that the latter were small), and bring them forth (ver. 18), when the priest addresses them: "What do ye?" Even at this stage, the narrative does not conceal the lukewarmness of the priest. He was not watchful when the people came, sent no information of anything to Micah, and even now raised no alarm to prevent the theft

which he could not but know was in progress. He was just an hireling. Hence, when the five propose to him to be priest to them, a whole tribe, rather than to a mere individual, but in that case to keep still, and come along with the idols, without making a noise, — he accepts the offer with joy, takes the idols into his priestly hands, and is for security inclosed in the midst of the warriors. What a strange thing is superstition! This priest has first of all betrayed his God and his office for money, has by his name as priest led many astray, and now, from mere vanity, abandons his benefactor, who has treated him as a son (ch. xvii. 11), and leaves him in the lurch; and yet he is eagerly snatched up as something valuable, and it is considered a great point gained when such hands as his carry gods who allow themselves to be taken off by robbers, and to be honored and praised by traitors. It is worthy of notice, that, according to ver. 20, the priest when he joins the warriors, regains custody only of the "ephod, teraphim, and image;" the *massekah*, the ornament of the image, containing its gold value, the Danites do not trust out of their own hands.

Vers. 21-26. They had just departed from the house of Micah. The Danites show themselves well versed in the arts of footbooters. They assume that they may be pursued. Accordingly, they cause everything that cannot defend itself or is difficult of transportation, to proceed in advance of them. (The term פְּבֻדָּה, from פָּבַד, heavy, must here undoubtedly be taken of what, like cattle, admits of only slow transportation;<sup>1</sup> for many valuables the Danites can scarcely have had with them. Moreover — and this is important here — the meaning "valuable," in this word, is only a derivative one from "heavy.") Thus they march along — behind their children, sheep, and beasts of burden — ready for instant action. Meanwhile, information of the theft had reached Micah. About his sanctuary a little village had formed itself. The people are quickly collected. They pursue. But there was no Abraham here, who with three hundred and eighteen men smote great armies. Neither Abraham's faith, nor Abraham's good cause were here. The Danites, when they hear the outcries of the pursuers, act at first as if nothing had happened. But when by Micah's anger they perceive that he knows all, they — probably the five leaders — tell him that it were better for him to be quiet — he might otherwise lose more; for the people there, whom he sees, are fierce of disposition, and know no mercy. And Micah was obliged to yield to superior power. The narrative shows strikingly how men, when excited about their property, show their true faces. Micah, who has always talked of Jehovah, as he who did him good, now, forgetting himself entirely, calls out to the Danites: "Ye have taken the gods which I made." For, of course, only "gods" can be taken away, not Jehovah; and his right to them, is based on the fact that he made them. Strictly speaking, he cannot complain. He had taken, and

<sup>1</sup> R. Judah Hallevi, *Kusari*, iv. 3, explains it to mean "retinue," such as comports with the honor of a king.

others have taken from him. He had committed treason, and he has been forsaken. He sees now what sort of fortune the priest and idolatry brought him. That which Micah had set up to lead others astray, became the occasion in consequence of which he was robbed. He carried sorrow back with him into his house; his return was desolate, — without gold, but with the judgment of his conscience. If he was led thereby to repentance, we may be sure that he soon found the Eternal God again, who pardons sinners, even though they have fallen seven and seventy times.

Vers. 27-29. And they called the name of the city Dan. As the Messenians changed the name of the city Zankle into Messene, so the Jektanides, who migrated from Yemen into Central Arabia, gave their tribe name to the possessions they conquered, as is proved by the kingdom of the Ghas-sanides on the borders of Syria (cf. Ritter, xi. 86). It has been the general and constantly recurring usage of all migrating nations. The strange country was embellished with homelike names. It was the opinion of ancient thinkers, that, as Seneca wrote to his mother, the best consolation in exile and emigration was to take along what one had been accustomed to (*natura communis*), as also one's peculiar gift (*propria virtus*). The Danites did this. They held their ground in the new Dan, whose fame had wholly eclipsed that of the old home, had not Samson subsequently arisen in Zorah. But though the new Dan never overshadowed the old, the name certainly took firm root in the North, and in the expression "from Dan to Beer-sheba," indicated the northern extremity of the actual possessions of the twelve tribes, although the Mosaic boundaries, and sometimes (as under David) even temporary occupation, extended beyond this point.

Nevertheless, whenever the history of Israel was rightly apprehended, in its properly spiritual character, the usurpation of Laish was never approved or justified. It was an arbitrary breaking in upon the given order, and upon the claims of another tribe; for the new Dan settled itself in districts which formed part of the original territories of the Northern tribes, particularly of Naphtali (who, it is true, had also failed to drive out the inhabitants of Beth-anath, *i. e.*, Paneas, cf. ch. i. 33). The new possession was associated with no other memories than such as conflicted with the true service of God: it was dedicated with the idolatrous image of Micah, and it was destroyed with the Calf of Jeroboam.<sup>1</sup> The usurpation, it should be carefully observed, proceeded not from individuals, but from the common will of the whole tribe. The division of Manasseh was contemplated in the plan of the lawgiver; but the self-division of Dan was a sin against the organic constitution of the nation. Hence, when the emigrants, who speak of themselves as a "tribe" and "family" in Israel (ver. 19), succeed in grafting the tribe name, Dan,<sup>2</sup> on the conquered territory, although the larger part of the tribe remained behind, the result is, that, after the career of Samson, the name became wholly lost from its old home. Even in Samson's day, the Danites, as such, are no longer spoken of. The tribe Judah already attracts everything to itself. The very remembrance of the families of Dan perished, for which reason we find no lists of them in the Books of Chronicles, while the families of Simeon, whose possessions were also

inclosed by those of Judah, are nevertheless duly enumerated (1 Chron. iv. 24 ff.). By appropriating to himself that which did not belong to him Dan lost even that which he had. It is on such spiritual grounds as these, that among the twelve tribes of the Apocalypse (ch. vii.), Dan finds no place. For of this tribe alone do we find such a notice as the following:

Vers. 30, 31. And the sons of Dan set up the graven image for themselves; and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, he and his sons, were priests to the tribe. Even as late as the last century, expositors (as Lillenthal, *Commentat. Critica*, p. 192) have defended the reading Manasseh, despite its suspended  $\aleph$ , and found approval in so doing (cf. Ernesti, *Theol. Bibliothek*, 1771, p. 112). Whoever is able to form a conception of the exegetical scrupulousness of the Jewish transcribers, will readily perceive that if משה had not stood in the MSS., that reading could never have been introduced. The Talmudic teachers admit this (*Baba bathra*, 109 a), and ascribe the circumstance that Moses could have such a descendant, to his wife (cf. *Talkut*, n. 72). Now, although it be touching to observe the reverential piety which could not bear to have the name of Moses connected with that of an idolatrous priest, and which, therefore, without altering the Hebrew text itself, as early as the time of the Talmudical

teachers, read the suspended  $\aleph$  in משה, the proceeding stands nevertheless in striking contrast with the admirable frankness of Biblical writers, who without regard to men state facts as they are, and direct the confidence of the faithful people, away from mortals, to the living God alone. The priest would not have been named at all, but for the wish to point out the contrast between his descent from the lawgiver who, in the name of God, condemned all idolatry as mortal sin, and his official position as priest at the shrine of an image. To this contrast alone, Jonathan owes it that his name was not forgotten. Sad, undoubtedly, beyond most similar cases, is this instance of degeneracy. But Scripture, which does not conceal the human weakness of even Moses himself, humbles herewith all vanity based on ancestors and descent. It avails nothing to be a descendant of Moses, if there be no personal worth; and the incomparable greatness and legal purity of the ancestor, give no guaranty that his descendants shall not become apostates. The fate of Moses, in this respect, was equally that of Abraham and Jacob, from whom Dan was descended. Many have called themselves children of Christ, who acted as Micah did. It is, no doubt, remarkable, that while Micah's priest was a descendant of Moses, he himself was an Ephraimite, consequently of the same tribe with Joshua. The priest is called Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, not as if he were the immediate son of Gershom, but as being descended from Moses through Gershom. The significance of the statement lies in the contrast between descendant and ancestor. It is this also that is made prominent by the Talmudists, when in connection with the change of Moses into Manasseh, they associate the latter name with the idolatrous king of Judah. Since Manasseh, the progenitor of the tribe of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Amos viii. 14, and Talmud, *Sabbat*, 67 b.

<sup>2</sup> And that not with the prefix "New" with which, for instance, Carthago Nova took the name of the mother city.



same name, was not a Levite, they could not think of him, as but for this we might suppose.<sup>1</sup>

Until the day of the exile of the ark (land).

The words עֲרִיִּים גְּלוּרֵי הָאָרֶץ have acquired extraordinary importance for the criticism of the Book of Judges. Had the passage been found less peculiarly adapted to prove the late composition of our Book, bringing it down to a time after the exile under Shalmaneser, the attention of critics would doubtless have been arrested by the singularity of the expression עֲרִיִּים גְּלוּרֵי הָאָרֶץ, "unto the captivity of the land." For, properly speaking, there was no such thing as a "captivity of the land." A captivity of Jerusalem (Jer. i. 3), of Judah (Jer. xl. 1), of Samaria (cf. 2 Kgs. xvii. 28, מִשְׁמָרֶן), of Jehoiachin (2 Kgs. xxv. 27), of Cush (Isa. xx. 4), is indeed spoken of, for these are historical names, representative of historical nations that were carried into exile. But *erets*, land, is not an historical, but only a natural name. A "captivity of Canaan" would be intelligible, but not a "captivity of the land." Moreover, there were no other "captivities" than those of Israel and Judah. Now, since only the former could be intended, and since a definition of time is to be given, we should expect to find it definitely connected either with Samaria or Israel (cf. 2 Kgs. xvii. 23, וַיִּגְלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל; cf. 2 Kgs. xv. 29; xviii. 11). Nor does the verb הִגְלָה, to take into exile or captivity, or its cognate nouns, ever occur in connection with אֶרֶץ (land) alone, while in 2 Kgs. xxiv. 15 we find the entirely intelligible expression: וַיִּגְלֵי אֶת אֱלֵי הָאָרֶץ, "he carried away the nobles of the land."

The linguistic improbability of the assumption that the narrator wrote הָאָרֶץ, the land, is reinforced by even stronger historical considerations. In the first place, there would arise an irremovable contradiction between vers. 30 and 31, if according to the one the cultus of the image at Dan continued until the exile of Israel, while according to the other it endured only to—say the death of Eli. For Bertheau's endeavor to show that no such contradiction arises, cannot stand examination. The descendants of Jonathan are spoken of, not as having been priests in general, but most definitely as having served the פֶּסֶל, image, of the tribe of Dan. For this reason, the setting up of the image (לְקִיּוֹמָה) and the appointment to its priesthood, are first spoken of,

1 (Kell has the following note on this subject: "The Talmud remarks, *Baba bathra*, f. 109 b: *An Gersom filius Menassis fuit, et non potius Mosis? sicut scriptum est: Filius Mosis fuerunt Gersom et Elieser* (1 Chron. xxiii. 14), *et propterea quod fecit opera Menassis* (the idolatrous son of Hezekiah, 2 Kgs. xxi.), *appendit eum scriptura familiae Menassis*. On this *Rabba bar Channa* observes: *prophetam* (i. e., the author of the Book of Judges) *studio noluisse Gersomum appellare filium Mosis quia ignominiosum fuisset ei Mosis, habuisse filium impium, sed vocat eum filium Menassis, litera tamen כ sursum elevata, in signum eam adesse vel abesse posse, et sit filius מְנַשֶּׁה*

*Menassis vel מְנַשֶּׁה Mosis; Menassis, studio et imitatione impletis, Mosis, prosapia.* Cf. Buxtorf, *Tiber*. p. 171. Later Rabbins say the same thing. R. Tanchum calls the

writing *הַתְּקִין כּוֹפְרִים* with כ suspended, a

in ver. 30, while its permanent preservation and maintenance נִשְׁמְרִי are set forth in ver. 31. This was already seen by Jewish expositors, who were not influenced by what Bertheau calls "pet ideas" of modern times. R. Jesaja says: The exile of Sanherib, cannot be meant; for the time during which the House of God was at Shiloh is spoken of. It must also be considered quite improbable that this separatistic idolatrous worship in Dan should have been allowed to exist unmolested during the time of Samuel, David, and Solomon. The story of Micah's image is introduced with the words, "in those days there was no king in Israel," in order to explain the possibility of such an occurrence. Could the author have written thus, if the history of the kings, from Jeroboam to Manasseh, had already been before him? And was not David just such a king as there was not in the time of Micah? Read the history of the first years of Solomon, the eighth chapter of the first Book of Kings among others, and consider whether it seem possible to receive the existence at that time of a separate idolatrous worship in Dan, with a priestly family of its own. And, certainly, if such a worship had still existed when Jeroboam cut himself loose from the house of David, he would not have found it necessary to institute in that very place the new cultus of the calf. Not upon him, would the burden of this sin have rested in that case (cf. 1 Kgs. xiv. 16). Nor, if in his time there had been a family of Levitical priests in Dan, would he have needed to look for others, "who were not of the sons of Levi" (1 Kgs. xii. 31).

If what has here been briefly<sup>2</sup> stated be duly considered, it will be felt to be necessary to substitute הָאָרֶץ, the ark of the covenant, for הָאָרֶץ, the land. This departure from the letter of Scripture is demanded by true reverence for its spirit. It is no wonder, therefore, that even the positive expositors among the Jews maintained that הָאָרֶץ must be explained as הָאָרֶץ, although naturally they do not speak of another reading. Thus Kimchi: *הוא יום שגלה הארון*. Abarbanel takes it in a similar manner.<sup>3</sup> It was probably under the influence of similar considerations that Houbigant conjecturally read הָאָרֶץ, to which Bleek (*Einleitung*, p. 347) and Ewald (*Alterthümer*, p. 258, 2d ed.) are likewise strongly inclined. The conjecture is so clear and easy, that the refusal to entertain it may well be met with the saying, "the letter killeth." The statement intended to be

and speaks of *בן משה* as *Kethibh*, and of *מן משה* *בן*, on the other hand, as *Keri*. According to this, *ben Mosheh* is certainly the original reading, albeit the reading *ben Menassheh* is also very old, seeing that it was read by the Targum, the Peshito, and the Septuagint, although in a few codices of the latter the reading *vini Moush* is still found, cf. Kennic. *Dissert. Gener. in V. T.* § 21. Jerome also has *filius Moysi*. — Tr.]

2 For much of it was long since strongly brought forward (cf. Keil in *loc.*). [Keil, it may be proper to remark, does not propose to change the reading, but quotes approvingly Hengstenberg's explanation of it, as indicated in the following words: "The historian considers the whole land as carried away into captivity in its sanctuary, which, as it were, formed its kernel and essence" (*Pent.* i. 191, Ryland's edit.). — Tr.]

3 *אבל אמרו על הזמן שבו נלה הארון*, ed. Lips. p. 67.



made is, that the priests in Dan served at the shrine of the idol until the exile of the ark. It is precisely the Book of Samuel, in which the capture of the ark is related, that uses the word *נָלָה* more frequently than any other historical book. The wife of the slain priest cries out, while she gives birth to a child, and dies: *נָלָה קָבוֹד יְשָׁרָאֵל*, "gone is glory from Israel" <sup>1</sup> (1 Sam. iv. 21); and hence, the son whom she bore was called "Ichabod: where is the glory." The very same word is here used. Now, the removal of the ark, and the death of the sons of Eli, were matters of extraordinary importance, not for the people only, but more especially for the priests. Their pride and sinfulness had been previously delineated by the narrative. They had thought, without repentance, to conquer with the sacred ark. The humiliation touched them with peculiar force. Eli dies from dismay; his sons are slain by the enemy; the ark of the covenant, the precious jewel of the priestly charge, falls into the hands of the heathen. The moral degeneracy of the priestly family is already indicated in the election of Samuel. He, too, was an Ephraimite, but one of a different stamp from Micah. Now, however, the whole fabric of priestly pride falls into ruins, and under the leadership of Samuel, the era of repentance begins. It is only when all this is taken into consideration, that the parallelism of vers. 30 and 31 stands out in unexpected light. Jonathan and his descendants, sons of Levi and of Moses, continued to officiate as priests in Dan, until the ark went into exile. After this great national calamity, a reformation ensued, including both the head and the members. The priests were terrified, and repented; their vainglorious assumption that wherever they were there the worship of God was also, was thoroughly overthrown, and they retired from the theatre of their evil doing. For this reason it is said of Jonathan and his successors, that "they were priests *עֲרֵי-נָלָה*, until the exile of the ark." And as in ver. 30 the duration of their priestly activity corresponds with the time that intervened until the fall of the ark, so in ver. 31, the

idolatrous House of Micah stands in contrast with the House of the true God in Shiloh. The same point of time is indicated in both verses. For with the removal of the ark, the significance of Shiloh ceased. Where the ark was, there God could be inquired of.<sup>2</sup> With the fall of the ark, the priests in Dan ceased; when the true sanctuary in Shiloh was broken up, the spurious sanctuary of Micah also was no longer esteemed. The lesson conveyed is, that if the true spirit of devotion to Jehovah had been preserved in connection with Shiloh and the ark of the covenant, such things as were done by Micah and in Dan would have been morally impossible. The priesthood must suffer and repent, before idolatry could be removed. It is true, that while the House of Micah was formerly spoken of as a *Beth Elohim*, a term applicable to every heathen temple as well, the House at Shiloh is here called *Beth ha-Elohim*, House of the true and real God; but it is nevertheless very significant that it is not called *Beth Jehovah*. During Shiloh's existence, the glory of the Levites had become greatly tarnished. The descendants of Aaron — as witness the sons of Eli — had desecrated their office; the descendants of Moses served the idol in Dan. But when with the fall of the ark the time of repentance had come for the priests of Aaron's tribe, the sin of the children of Moses also came to an end. Repentance leads the children back to their fathers.

In this way, the necessity of finding in our text a reference to the removal of the ark demonstrates itself both externally and internally. The fact that this exposition is not found indicated in the Masora, is to be explained from the fidelity with which every letter was preserved, but especially from the circumstance that during the exile of the people, the minds of the writers and readers of the ancient manuscripts were naturally full of that sad event, while the historical fact of the exile of the ark of the covenant belonged to the hoary past. In exile, Israel read and found this fate on every page. To their thoughts, "the land," which they had left, was ever present. The banished reads "home," in every thing.

<sup>1</sup> The great significance of the exile of the ark of the covenant, was still fully felt when Ps. lxxviii. was written, compare vers. 60 and 61: "He rejected the tabernacle of Shiloh," and "He delivered his strength (glory) into captivity." The whole bearing of the psalm forbids the supposi-

tion of a sanctuary in Shiloh until the Assyrian period (Delitzsch, on Ps. lxxviii. 60 ff.).

<sup>2</sup> This is also clearly proved by ch. xx. 27: "And the sons of Israel inquired of Jehovah; for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days."

## SECOND SECTION.

THE STORY OF THE INFAMOUS DEED PERPETRATED AT GIBEAH, AND ITS TERRIBLE CONSEQUENCES  
ANOTHER ILLUSTRATION OF THE EVILS THAT RESULT WHEN "EVERY MAN DOES  
WHAT IS GOOD IN HIS OWN EYES."

*A Levite, whose concubine has left him, goes to her father's house, and persuades her to return. On their journey home, they enter Gibeah to pass the night there, but are inhospitably left in the market-place, until an Ephraimite resident of the city takes them home.*

## CHAPTER XIX. 1-21.

- 1 And it came to pass in those days, when *there was* no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side [in the hinder parts] of mount Ephraim,
- 2 who took to him a concubine out of Beth-lehem-judah. And his concubine played the whore against him,<sup>1</sup> and went away from him unto her father's house to Beth-lehem-judah, and was there [some time (namely).] four whole [omit: whole]
- 3 months. And her husband arose, and went after her, to speak friendly unto her, *and* to bring her again,<sup>2</sup> having his servant with him, and a couple of asses: and she brought him into her father's house: and when the father of the damsel saw
- 4 him, he rejoiced to meet him. And his father-in-law, the damsel's father, retained him; and he abode with him three days: so they did eat and drink, and lodged
- 5 there. And it came to pass on the fourth day, when [that] they arose early in the morning, that [and] he rose up to depart: and the damsel's father said unto his son-in-law, Comfort [Strengthen] thine heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go
- 6 your way. And they sat down, and did eat and drink both of them together: for [and] the damsel's father had [omit: had] said unto the man, Be content, I pray
- 7 thee, and tarry all [pass the] night, and let thine heart be merry. And when the man rose up to depart, his father-in-law urged him: therefore he [turned and]
- 8 lodged there again. And he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart: and the damsel's father said, Comfort [Strengthen] thine heart, I pray thee. And they tarried<sup>3</sup> until afternoon [until the day declined], and they did eat both of
- 9 them. And when the man rose up to depart, he, and his concubine, and his servant, his father-in-law, the damsel's father, said unto him, Behold now, the day draweth toward evening, I pray you tarry all [pass the] night: [and again:] behold,
- 10 the day groweth to an end [declines], lodge here, that [and let] thine heart may [omit: may] be merry; and to-morrow [you shall] get you early on your way,
- 11 that thou mayest go home [and thou shalt go to thy tent]. But the man would not tarry that night, but he rose up and departed, and came over against Jebus, which is Jerusalem: and *there were* with him two asses saddled, his concubine also *was*
- 12 with him. And when they *were* by Jebus, the day was far spent; and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn in into this city of the
- 13 Jebusites, and lodge in it. And his master said unto him, We will not turn aside hither<sup>4</sup> into the city of a stranger, that is not of the children [sons] of Israel;
- 14 we will pass over to [as far as] Gibeah. And he said unto his servant, Come,<sup>5</sup> [forward:] and let us draw near to one of these [the *sc.* neighboring] places [,] to lodge
- 15 all [and pass the] night, [omit: ,] in Gibeah, or in Ramah. And they passed on and went their way; and the sun went down upon them *when they were* by Gibeah,
- 16 which *belongeth* to Benjamin. And they turned aside thither, to go in *and* to lodge in Gibeah: and when he went in, he sat him down in a street [the open space] of
- the city: for [and] *there was* no man that took them into his house to lodging. And behold, there came an old man from his work out of the field at even, which *was* also [and the man was] of mount Ephraim; and he sojourned in Gibeah; but the

- 17 men of the place were Benjamites. And when [omit: when] he had [omit: had] lifted up his eyes, he [and] saw a [the] wayfaring man in the street [open space] of the city: and the old man said, Whither goest thou? and whence comest thou?
- 18 And he said unto him, We *are* passing from Beth-lehem-judah toward the [hinder] side of mount Ephraim: from thence *am* I: and I went to Beth-lehem-judah, but I *am now* going to the house of the Lord [Jehovah];<sup>6</sup> and there is no man that
- 19 receiveth me to house. Yet there is [we have] both straw and provender for our asses; and there is [we have] bread and wine also for me, and for thy handmaid, and for the young man *which is* with thy servants: *there is* no want of any thing.
- 20 And the old man said, Peace *be* with thee; howsoever [only], *let* all thy wants *lie*
- 21 upon me; only lodge not in the street [open space]. So he brought him into his house, and gave provender unto the asses: and they washed their feet, and did *eat* and drink.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[<sup>1</sup> Ver. 2. — וְהִנֵּה עָלָיו. Dr. Cassel renders: *Und es gelüstete seinem Nebenweib über ihn hinaus*; which may possibly be good interpretation, but cannot be admitted as translation. The Sept. and Vulg. do not render the phrase at all, while the Chaldee softens it down to "she despised him." Hence, it has been thought that the present reading of the Hebrew text is wrong; but the fact that the Peshito has it, and that the other ancient versions do not agree in their reading, shows that the diversity arose from a sense of incongruity between what was affirmed of the woman and the efforts of the Levite to recover her. עָלָיו is "against him." — Tr.]

2 Ver. 3. — The *keri* לְהַשִּׁיבָה is evidently the more appropriate reading, as Studer and Bertheau have conceded. [In the *kethibh*, לְהַשִּׁיבוּ, the suffix refers to the preceding לֵב: "to cause her heart to return," i. e., to turn again to her husband. Compare Keil, who deems the *keri* a "needless correction." — Tr.]

8 Ver. 8. — הִתְמַהֲמַהּ. Older Jewish expositors, as Abarbanel and Meir Obernick, very properly take this, not as imperative, but as 3d per. perf. It is against the sense to make the father say: "Delay till it become evening." Ver. 9 also is against this. On the word, see ch. iii. 26. Beza has correctly: *cunctati sunt*.

[<sup>4</sup> Ver. 12.—The "hither" of the E. V. seems to be intended as a rendering of הֵנָּה, which, however, belongs to the next clause. הֵנָּה must be taken with הִנֵּה, in the sense הֵנָּה . . . הִנֵּה, "where." "It is true" (says Bertheau), "that הֵנָּה does not elsewhere occur in this construction with הִנֵּה, but this is the only suitable way of taking it here, for it cannot be the plur. fem. pronoun, and must therefore mean 'there.'" The proper rendering of the verse, then, would be: "We will not turn aside into the city of the stranger, where there are none of the sons of Israel." The E. V. leaves it doubtful whether "that" refers to "city" or to "stranger." Dr. Cassel refers it to the latter, and ignores the הֵנָּה altogether. — Tr.]

[<sup>5</sup> Ver. 13. — לֵךְ is for לִכְתֹּב, the imperative of כָּתַב, with He paragoge. — לֵכָה is the 1st per. plur. perfect, contracted from לִכְתְּבוּ. — Tr.]

[<sup>6</sup> Ver. 18. — וְאֶת־בֵּית יְהוָה אֲנִי הֹלֵךְ. The meaning of this clause is obscure. The Sept. renders as if it read בֵּיתִי יְהוָה instead of בֵּית יְהוָה: I am going to my house. The Targum, Peshito, Vulgate, and among moderns, Bertheau, De Wette, Bunsen (the two latter in their versions), take וְאֶת־בֵּית יְהוָה as the accusative, and render as the E. V. Others, as Studer, Keil, and our author, take אֶת as a preposition, in the sense "with," "at," or "by:" "I walk by (or in) the House of Jehovah," i. e., I perform priestly service in connection with the sanctuary. This gives a good sense (cf. the commentary below), but the mode of expressing it seems singular. On the other hand, there is no compulsory evidence in favor of this and against the other rendering. The sanctuary being at Shiloh, there is (so far as the site of this place is known) no conflict between the Levite's first statement that he is going to the "hinder parts" (a necessarily indefinite expression) of the mountains of Ephraim, and his subsequent supplementary statement that he is going to the "House of Jehovah." Keil's objection that אֶת הַלֵּךְ does not mean to go to a place, but to pass through it (cf. Deut. i. 19; Isa. i. 10. etc.), cannot be considered decisive. Since the "through" does not lie in the אֶת, it proves only that the accusative may indicate either the place to which, or that through which, one goes. It is true, that the place to which one goes, is usually put in the accusative without אֶת, either with or without ה local; but as אֶת was constantly used with the definite accusative, and had withal so entirely lost all meaning of its own, it is certainly quite conceivable that it might almost unconsciously slip from the pen in a place where ordinarily common usage did not employ it. And since, as already remarked, the idea of "through" does not lie in אֶת, it may well be asked whether the instances referred to by Keil are not exceptions to common usage quite as much as the present phrase. Upon the whole, we are inclined to adopt the rendering of the E. V. — Tr.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 1. When there was no king in Israel. The following narrative has, indeed, as was al-

ready remarked, no special connection, either chronological or local, with the history related in chaps. xvii. and xviii.; but it none the less affords, in conjunction with that history, occasion for a

series of observations which testify, in a highly instructive manner, of the organic idea which pervades the whole Book. We shall attempt to indicate them at the close of the narrative. "There was no king in Israel:" this alone it was that made the occurrences of both chaps. xvii. and xviii., and chaps. xix.-xxi. possible. In the present history also, a Levite is involved. The decay of the priesthood is here also indicated. From the connection it is sufficiently clear that the conduct of the Levite who, living in the northern part of the mountains of Ephraim, procures himself a concubine out of Bethlehem—probably for no other reason than that, as Josephus rightly conjectures, he was smitten with her beauty,—is not approved. From the fact that the residence of the Levite is here spoken of as being in the "hinder parts" of the mountains, by which the northern parts are to be understood, no reliable inference can be drawn as to the locality of the writer; for the Levite himself uses the same expression (ver. 18). Since the Levite took a concubine (נָשָׂא נְזִינָה), it must be assumed that he already had a wife. Else why did he not make this woman his wife? For other grounds, such as have been conjectured, find no support in the narrative. Precisely here lies the blot upon the character of the priest, which the narrative hints at. The word נְזִינָה is both etymologically and in sense identical with the Greek and Roman *πάλλαξ*, *peller*, *παλλακίς*; but Benfey's derivation cannot be received. The sense "concubine," which the word

has, may perhaps be explained from נָזַל. Among the ancient Greeks also the taking of a concubine was not considered exactly blameworthy, but Laertes refrained from touching Eurycleia for "fear of the anger of his wife" (*Odys.* i. 434). The sequel shows that the Levite had done better if he had not taken a concubine. A concubine also was the ruin of Gideon's family (ch. vii. 31).

Ver. 2. And the concubine lusted after others beside himself. The concubine was unchastely disposed. This is only a stronger expression for what the moderns mean when with palliative extenuation they say: "She did not love her husband." Her sensuality was not satisfied with the Levite. In this way the narrator explains the ground of her leaving him. The correctness of נָזַל was frequently doubted in former days, but only because the connection of the entire narrative was misapprehended. נָזַל is to play the harlot, not only in act, but also in disposition and spirit (cf. *μυιχεύειν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ*, Matt. v. 28): hence used also of idolatry. In the added נָזַל "over him,"<sup>1</sup> it is delicately indicated that she did not so act as to be put away by him, but that she was of such a disposition as to be unwilling to live with him. That she left him without his consent can have had its ground only in her concupiscent, which the narrator intentionally designates by the term נָזַל, in order to blame the Levite for yet running after such a woman.<sup>2</sup> For it is written, Lev. xxi. 7: "A נָזַל, harlot, and one pol-

luted, they shall not take to wife." Although this passage speaks only of the sons of Aaron, it applies nevertheless to all who, as the Levite says of himself, "walk in the house of Jehovah" (ver. 18).

And she was there some time (about) four months. She had perhaps gone away under pretext of visiting her parents, and did not come back. The נָזַל before the more definite statement of time, expresses the Latin *circiter*. As she had already remained away some four months, it looked as if she would not return to her husband's house at all; wherefore the Levite set out to persuade her to come back. He should not have done this, since she was such as that it was said of her:

נָזַלָהּ. Her father, for his part, ought to have sent her back; for the Levite had undoubtedly not failed to pay him a morning-gift (cf. Ex. xxii. 15), the remembrance of which, and the fear that if his daughter did not go back with her husband he might be called upon to return it, had probably no little influence in producing the friendliness with which he received him. Such was also the ancient Homeric custom, as illustrated in the instance of Hephaistos, who having proved the infidelity of his spouse, demands back the gifts with which he had presented her father (*Odys.* viii. 318).

Ver. 3. And her husband arose and went after her. The Levite, however, desires only the woman, not any money. Hence it is said that he went after her in order to speak "to her heart." And he shows it by bringing two asses with him,—one of them for her use. It never occurs to him to think that her father may perhaps provide her with one. Only after the daughter has again become friendly to him, does he allow her to lead him to her father. The uncommon hospitality which the latter extends to the Levite, has, it must be allowed, a peculiar by-taste to it. No doubt, it is apologetic in its design, and expressive of a wish for reconciliation. This is clearly enough expressed in the acts of eating and drinking together. But the urgency with which after three days he presses the Levite to remain, although the latter is desirous of returning home, is not sanctioned by the delicate laws of ancient hospitality. The incident illustrates the beauty of the words which Menelaos addresses to Telemachus who desires to go home (*Odys.* xv. 69): "I will not detain thee here; for I also am angry with a host who through troublesome friendship offers troublesome enmity, for order is best in everything. Equally bad are both he who hastens the guest who would stay, and he who detains him who would go" (cf. Nägelsbach, *Hom. Theol.* p. 256). The injuriousness of exaggerated hospitality is here also put in instructive contrast with the utter absence of it, which it fell to the lot of the Levite soon to experience.

Vers. 4-9. And his father-in-law detained him. The carnal nature of the Levite manifests itself here also. Soon after the reconciliation, he wished to depart again; but he yields, and spends three days in eating and drinking. On the fourth morning, he will go; but his host urges him first to take a "morsel of bread." He might nevertheless have set out on his journey; but "they ate

was added to indicate this. But *hinc* our author conceives this to be indicated by the preposition and suffix, does not appear. — Tr.]

1 [The German is: *süßer ihm*. The sentence seems to mean that if the woman had actually committed adultery, the fact would have been expressed by נָזַלָהּ alone, but that since her sin existed only in disposition, the עָלָהּ

2 Other views, as advanced by Starke and others, according to which this journey of the Levite redounds to his praise, do not appear to have any support in the text.

and drank," and it became evening. He proposed indeed to go, but turned about and remained. On the fifth morning, everything is ready for a start. But refreshments are first taken at the request of the host: they "both ate," and thus spent the day until the evening approached. No right-minded Levite manifests himself here. We hear of nothing but eating and drinking. It reflects no honor on a man who "walks in the house of God," that he runs after a concubine, and cannot resist a good table.

When, however, at last he sets out, late in the afternoon, his conscience appears to urge him forward, and to make him ashamed of having remained so long. Perhaps he has no time to spare, if with his servant and animals, he is to rest at home on the Sabbath. For if we may suppose that the reconciliation took place on the Sabbath, the first three days of feasting would fall on our Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday: the "fourth day" of ver. 5 would be Wednesday, and the "fifth day" our Thursday; and he might think it possible to reach home before the next evening. But in that case no time was to be lost. His experience is that of all weak and vacillating people: first, unnecessary delay, and then overstrained hurry.

The delineation of these scenes, which repeat themselves so frequently in life, is notwithstanding its brevity, full of vivacity and beauty. The guests continually rise at early daybreak (בִּבְקֹר); but the evening still finds them in the same place. The host is unwearied in encouragements "to refresh the heart" (וְיָרִיט לִבָּךְ, כִּי־לֵבָךְ לִבְדָּה);<sup>1</sup> but the "refreshing" continues until "the day declines." Verses 8 and 9 especially give a striking picture of irresolution and dilatoriness. They permit us to follow the various stages of the day that were thus dissipated. With breakfast they lingered along (הִתְמַהֲמַהוּ) until (בְּצֹרֶת הַיּוֹם) say after noon. While they prepare themselves anew to take their departure, time passes, and the host begs them to remain, "for the day draweth toward evening;" and after a little more lingering — for this idea must be interposed before חֲמֹרֵי הַיּוֹם — he is able to urge, "spend the night, for the day declines."

It is unmistakably clear that the father-in-law meant it well with the Levite, when, according to general popular usage, he overwhelmed him with food and drink and pressing invitations; but it is incumbent on Levites especially, not to be too much taken up with such matters. It is better that they make it evident, that in case of necessity they are quite content with a *path lechem*, a morsel of bread.

Vers. 10 ff. But the man would not tarry that

<sup>1</sup> כִּי־לֵבָךְ. In this unusual form an imperative of courteous respect is probably indicated.

<sup>2</sup> It does not by any means follow from this, however, that the city at that time did not yet bear the name Jerusalem. The place was still a Jebusite city; and that fact is here made prominent in order to explain why the Levite would not turn in thither.

<sup>3</sup> [This identification of Gibeah with Jeba does not appear to be tenable; for it makes it incomprehensible how the Levite could come to Gibeah before he came to Ramah, as the narrative manifestly implies that he did. Keil also most strangely speaks here of Gibeah as being Jeba, although on Josh. xviii. 23, he identifies it with Tulleil el Fül, a high hill

night. At last — but now unseasonably, for the night is at hand — he is firm in his resolution to depart. The sun is already rapidly declining, when he comes past Jerusalem, at that time still called Jebus,<sup>2</sup> for the tribe of Benjamin had not yet conquered it (ch. i. 21). He will not turn in thither, although advised to do so by his servant, because he has "two saddled asses and his concubine with him," — the repetition of which statement is thus explained, — and the city belongs not to Israel. In other words, he fears lest in Jebus the rights of hospitality might be violated, and himself be plundered. He hastens forward, therefore, in order to reach one of the Israelitish cities farther on, Gibeah, perhaps, or Ramah. He succeeds only in reaching the former. Darkness had set in: it was unavoidably necessary to stay there over night. It will soon be seen that it would have been better if he had not suffered himself to be detained in the morning, and that he could not have done worse if he had turned into the heathen city.

Vers. 15-21. And no man took them to his house. Gibeah (the present Jeba, Geba)<sup>3</sup> lies an hour from Ramah (at present er-Râm), about two and a half hours from Jerusalem,<sup>4</sup> and towards four hours from Bethlehem. It belonged to Benjamin. Strangers disposed themselves on the open space or square of the city (רֶחֶב, *platea*), whence according to ancient usage the residents took them to their own homes. *Ælian* relates (*Var. Hist.* iv. 1), that the Lucanians went so far as to make the man who did not show hospitality to the stranger entering the city at sunset, liable to legal punishment. But here in Israel, where love toward the stranger was enjoined by the law (Deut. x. 19), and where Job exclaims: "The stranger did not lodge in the street" (ch. xxxi. 32), no one invited the traveller to the shelter of his roof.

This inhospitable disposition was characteristic only of the inhabitants of this city; for a man of Ephraim, who resided in Gibeah, did not share it. When he, an old man, came from the field, and saw that a stranger had already made preparations to pass the night in the open air, he went to him with hospitable intent. That he first asks, Whence art thou? and whither goest thou? is only the result of his astonishment that anybody should purpose to pass the night in Gibeah out of doors. For the city had probably a bad name in the neighboring region, so that, when possible, it was shunned by travellers. Hence the question, Whence comest thou, that thou hast turned in here for the night?

My walk in life is at the house of Jehovah. The narrator has hitherto spoken of the Levite only as "the man." The character of a Levite did not show itself in him. But now, in his answer to the aged Ephraimite, the Levite himself makes mention of his order. I come, he says,

about midway between Jerusalem and er-Râm. This place, fixed upon by Robinson (*B. R.* i. 577), and after him by Ritter (cf. Gage's transl. iv. 219), and many others, is undoubtedly the site of the ancient Gibeah (cf. Smith's *Bib. Dict.* s. v. "Gibeah"). The distance of Gibeah from Jerusalem given by Josephus (compare the next note) agrees with this; for the distance of Tulleil el Fül from Jerusalem is about two-thirds that of Bethlehem (while Jeba is much farther, cf. Dr. Cassel's "two hours and a half"). Jeba is the Geba of Scripture (Rob. i. 440; *Bib. Dict.* s. v. "Geba"). — Ta.]

<sup>4</sup> Josephus has stated the distance at twenty stadia, while from Bethlehem to Jerusalem he reckons thirty stadia.

from Bethlehem, but reside behind the mountains. The purpose for which he went to Bethlehem, he does not communicate; but, on the other hand, he does take occasion to state that he is a Levite (Josephus). He expresses this paraphrastically, by saying that "he walks in the house of God," namely, as a servant of God. He chooses this form of expression in order to invite hospitality, and to place the refusal of it in its worst light. A man who is at home in the House of God, no one here receives into his house. But one degeneracy follows in the wake of another. When Levites are so weak as he has shown himself, the virtues of others cannot continue strong. The dignity of which it now occurs to him to speak, he himself should have respected heretofore. The explanation of *וְיָחִידָהּ בֵּית יְהוָה אֲנִי הֹלֵךְ*, as if it meant, "and I am going to the house of Jeho-

vah," is not only philologically difficult, but on account of the sense, impossible.<sup>1</sup> Whither he goes, he has already said, namely, to the rear part of the mountains; he wishes now to say who he is that he enjoys the dignity of walking "*with* (i. e., *in*) the house of Jehovah," as its servant. He is very anxious to obtain shelter, for the prospect of spending the night in an inhospitable city without a roof over him, could not but fill him with apprehensions. The same cause prevented him from continuing his journey. Hence the humble request to the aged householder to take him in. He has everything necessary with him,—his entertainer shall be at no expense. He speaks of himself as his "servant," and of the woman as "thy handmaid." The old man gladly complies with the ancient hospitable usage, according to which animals are fed *first*, and the wants of men are attended to afterwards.

<sup>1</sup> This also removes the supposition that the Levite was from Shiloh. This is not to be assumed, since it is not stated. The above words give no more information concerning the

birth-place of the Levite, than is conveyed in the general statement that he was a Levite.

*The wicked deed of the Gibeathites, and the measure taken by the Levite to invoke the judgment of the nation on the perpetrators.*

#### CHAPTER XIX. 22–30.

- 22 Now as they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain [omit: certain] sons of Belial [worthless fellows], beset the house round about, and beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him.
- 23 And the man, the master of the house, went out unto them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren. *nay*. I pray you, do not so wickedly; seeing that this man is
- 24 come into mine house, do not this folly. Behold, *here is* my daughter, a maiden [virgin], and his concubine; them I will bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you: but unto this man do not so vile a thing
- 25 [*viz.* the matter of this folly]. But the men would not hearken to him: so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; and they knew her, and abused her all the night until the morning: and when the day began to spring, they
- 26 let her go. Then came the woman in the dawning of the day, and fell down at
- 27 the door of the man's house where her lord *was*, [*and lay there*] till it was light. And her lord rose up in the morning, and opened the doors of the house, and went out to go his way: and behold, the woman his concubine was fallen down *at* the door
- 28 of the house, and her hands *were* upon the threshold. And he said unto her, Up, and let us be going. But none answered. Then the man took her *up* upon an
- 29 [the] ass, and the man rose up, and gat him unto his place. And when he was come into his house, he took a knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, *together* with [according to] her bones, into twelve pieces, and sent her into
- 30 all the coasts [country] of Israel. And it was so, that all that saw it, said,<sup>1</sup> There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children [sons] of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day: consider of it, take advice, and speak *your minds*.

#### TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 30.—"The perfects *וַיִּחַדּוּ*, *וַיִּחַדּוּ*, ver. 30, do not stand for the imperfects with *vav* consecutive *וַיִּחַדּוּ*, *וַיִּחַדּוּ*, as Hitzig, Bertheau, and others suppose, but are *perfecta consequentia*, expressive of the result which

the Levite expects from his action. It is only necessary to supply a לִּצְדִּיק before הָיָה, which in lively narration or agitated discourse is frequently omitted (cf. e. g. Ex. viii. 6 with Judg. vii. 2). The narrator uses the perfects, instead of the imperfects with simple וְ, usual in clauses expressive of design, *quia quod futurum esse praevidebat tanquam factum animo suo observabatur* (Rosenmüller). The Levite's expectation that the moral indignation of all the tribes will be roused against such wickedness, and will lead them to resolve on punishment, is thus represented not as a doubtful conjecture, but as the confident anticipation of a certainly ensuing fact" (Keil). It is impossible to imitate this exactly in English, but the better rendering of the passage would be: "sent her into all the territory of Israel, saying [or, as we would say, thinking] it shall be that all who see shall say, There was no such deed done or seen," etc. Chapter xx shows, as Keil remarks, that the Levite was right in his anticipations. Dr. Cassel translates as the E. V. — Tr.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Vers. 22 ff. The narrator is aware that he has to relate a history similar to the one that occurred in Sodom in the days of Lot; for at suitable points his language takes the same turns of expression (cf. Gen. xix. 5, 7, 8). Lot was only a resident in Sodom, just as here the aged Ephraimite is in Gibeah. He, like the latter, had invited the guests to his house. The Sodomites surrounded the house, and demanded the surrender of the strangers, as the Gibeathites do here. Lot proposes to bring forth his daughters, and the aged host of our history makes the same proposition. The dissimilarities, it is true, are equally conspicuous. The guests of Lot were angels, who frustrated all sinful designs: here, the entertainer receives but an imperfect Levite. Although the aged host cannot be compared with the hospitable nephew of Abraham, it must be admitted that he acts like a good Israelite. The men of Gibeah were personally sinners even beyond those of Sodom, for they had a God who does not tolerate such abominations. But their sin was the outbreaking of individual depravity; in Sodom it was the fruit of the national life. Hence, both were punished according to their guilt. Benjamin perished almost; Sodom was wholly destroyed. In Sodom all sinned, from the youth to the gray head (Gen. xix. 4): in Gibeah, the criminals were "sons of wickedness,"

who, however, by being called אֲנָשֵׁי הָעִיר, "men of the city," are shown to belong to the higher classes, which circumstance also accounts for their unchecked attainment of such great proficiency in evil. This nightly vagabondizing of wanton youth was but too well known to antiquity, even in Roman times, when Roman emperors took part in it. Here, however, unholly, idolatrous usages seem also to have come into play, according to which strangers were abused for purposes of sensuality, as, contrariwise, in the service of the Syrian Goddess natives were given up to the stranger. It was a night-riot, which began with sundown and ceased with the morning. Hence, the Levite probably remained unmolested until night had fully set in, and could depart unhindered when the day broke.

It was at all events a fearful crime in Israel. The Mosaic law punished it with death (Lev. xx. 13; cf. ch. xviii. 22, etc.). Even the infringement of the rights of hospitality was in Hesiod's opinion, which was followed by the later Greeks, a crime of equal magnitude with adultery or the defilement of a father's bed (Nägelsbach, *Nachkom. Theol.* 252 f.). The aged host was, therefore, right

in speaking of the matter as a נִבְלָה, an abominable crime. But the savage Benjamites are no more willing to hear reason than the men of Sodom were. Their violent thundering at the door (בְּהִנְפִּיקוֹם), and their language (cf. Gen. xix. 9), afforded sufficient occasion to the host to fear that they would soon break into the house itself. He is most especially concerned to shield the Levite, for in this direction lay the chief crime. Hence, no requisition is made upon the servant to give himself up for his master — for that would not have changed the nature of the crime, — but the host, like Lot, offers them women,<sup>1</sup> his own daughter being one. But he is not called upon to make this sacrifice: the Benjamites will not have his daughter; for she is no stranger, and belongs to their neighbor. It is especially to this offer of his daughter that the opening words of ver. 25 apply: "they would not hearken." Hereupon the Levite takes his resolution, and leads forth his concubine. Her beauty pacifies the violent wantons; but she herself falls a victim to their horrible lusts. The beastly treatment she receives deprives her of life. What an awful lesson! The same woman, whose sensuality was heretofore unsatisfied, is now killed by excess of illicit intercourse. The Levite who, notwithstanding her wanton disposition, runs after her, is now obliged to give her up to others.<sup>2</sup> She who would not live for him, must now die for him. — In Christendom, also, similar horrors have occurred. Who could bear to write the history of licentiousness! At the close of the fourteenth century a Thuringian knight abducted a maiden. Placing her on his horse behind himself, he intended to reach Erfurt the same evening before the closing of the city-gates. He failed, and was compelled to seek shelter with the maiden in the hospital situated outside of the city. The inmates, when they saw the beautiful woman, murdered the knight, and abused her until she died. The crime being discovered, the house was burned down, together with the criminals (Falkenstein, *Hist. von Erfurt*, p. 277).

Vers. 29 f. And he came into his house. It must have been a fearful night for the Levite, knowing that his concubine was in the power of the wanton mob, and it was a terrible morning when he found her dead on the threshold of the house. He had risen early, and made better haste to get away from the house of his host than he had done to leave that of his father-in-law, in order to avoid a meeting with the inhabitants.<sup>3</sup> His journey was a sad one; for his second ass carried

<sup>1</sup> He imitates the example of Lot. Therein lies his excuse. He seeks to prevent one sin, and commits another without knowing whether he can prevent the first.

<sup>2</sup> This act of his also testifies to the degeneracy of the Levitical body. He has not moral strength enough to die in order to preserve himself from defilement, and hence thinks himself obliged to surrender his concubine. His own head, therefore, shares in the guilt of the crime done to the woman.

<sup>3</sup> [He probably gave up all idea of recovering his concubine, as being hopeless. So Bertheau and Keil. He may have entertained plans for rescuing her in some more effective way. There is at all events nothing in the text that justifies us to suppose that he went on his way, "as if he did not once think what had become of his unhappy companion," and was "reminded of her only by stumbling upon her lifeless corpse," as Bush rather wildly comments. — Tr.]

the lifeless body of the dishonored woman. Filled with these horrors, perpetrated against him in Israel, he appeals to all the people of Israel. He cuts the corpse into twelve pieces, and sends them out in every direction. Expositors have one after another spoken here of Lucian's narrative (in *Toraris*) of the Scythian custom of sitting on the hide: "if any man is injured by another, and is unable to revenge himself, he sacrifices an ox, cuts up the flesh, and dresses it; then spreading the skin on the ground, he sits down on it, etc. Whoever pleases then comes, takes a part of the flesh, and placing his right foot on the hide, makes a solemn promise to assist him to the utmost of his abilities." It must be said that there is no analogy whatever between this usage and the act of the Levite. The Scythian usage is the symbolical formula of an oath, by which all who take part in it promise to unite themselves into one body with the supplicant. But such is not the idea in our passage, nor yet in 1 Sam. xi. 7. Saul sends out the pieces of the divided oxen with the threatening message, that thus it shall be done to the oxen of every one who does not take the field after him. The Levite has no right to do anything of this kind. He issues no threat which he himself can execute. Nor does he place Israel under oath<sup>1</sup> to avenge his wrong. But he shows the nation what is possible within its borders, and what may happen to any one in Israel as well as it has happened to himself. Hence, he sends not a divided ox, but

the divided woman. Saul threatens that the oxen of those who do not follow him, shall be cut to pieces. The Levite intimates that unless such practices are abolished in Israel, the same fate may befall any woman. He points to the anarchy which breaks out in Israel, when the rights of hospitality are no longer respected, and the rights of the householder no longer secure, and when heathen abominations like those of Sodom are practiced in the land.<sup>2</sup> The woman cut in pieces speaks more loudly than any other language could do. Of course, a message accompanied the pieces of the body, the contents of which are given in verse 30. Every one who saw must say that anything like this had not occurred in Israel since the nation dwelt in Canaan. It closed with the words: "Take the matter to heart, advise, and speak."

Doubtless, the divided body spake loudly to all the tribes of Israel. But it spoke not of repentance, but only of the necessity of taking prudent measures against the recurrence of similar outrages, of which any one might himself become the victim. And yet the thing needed was not merely the removal of the abomination which was manifest, but the conversion of the heart, whose hidden wickedness had produced the abomination. The Levite points to the sins that had been committed; but does he also confess the share he himself had in them, and in the guilt that attached to them? The same self-righteousness is revealed by the whole people, as is shown by ch. xx.

<sup>1</sup> It might be thought that an analogy is afforded by the singular oath on the sacrificial pieces of a boar, a ram, and a bull, which Demosthenes mentions as taken by the accuser

in cases of murder (*adv. Aristocratem*, p. 642); but here also none exists.

<sup>2</sup> This sense is also contained in the words of the Levite in ch. xx. 6.

*The tribes of Israel, convened at Mizpah, resolve to punish the outrage committed at Gibeah. They call on the tribe of Benjamin to deliver up the guilty, but are met with a refusal.*

## CHAPTER XX. 1-13.

- 1 Then all the children [sons] of Israel went out, and the congregation was gathered together as one man, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, with [and] the land of
- 2 Gilead, unto the Lord [Jehovah] in Mizpeh [Mizpah]. And the chief [chiefs] of all the people, *even* of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, [which assembly numbered] four hundred thousand footmen
- 3 that drew sword.<sup>1</sup> (Now the children [sons] of Benjamin heard that the children [sons] of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh). Then said the children [sons] of Israel,
- 4 Tell us, how was [happened] this wickedness? And [the man,] the Levite, the husband of the woman that was slain, answered and said, I came into [unto]
- 5 Gibeah that *belongeth* to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to lodge. And the men [lords] of Gibeah rose against me, and beset the house round about upon me by night, *and* thought to have slain me: and my concubine have they forced [humbled],
- 6 that she is dead [that she died]. And I took my concubine, and cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel: for they have
- 7 committed lewdness and folly in Israel. Behold, ye *are* all children [sons] of Israel: give here your advice and counsel. And all the people arose as one man, saying, We will not any *of us* go to his tent, neither will we any *of us* turn into
- 9 his house: But now this *shall be* the thing which we will do to Gibeah: *we will go*



10 *up* by lot against it;<sup>2</sup> And we will take ten men of an hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, and an hundred of a thousand, and a thousand out of ten thousand, to fetch victual for the people, that they may do, when they come to Gibeah of Benjamin, according to all the folly that they have wrought in Israel.<sup>3</sup> So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, knit together as one man. And the tribes of Israel sent men through [into] all the tribe [tribes] of Benjamin, saying, What wickedness *is* this that is [was] done among you? Now therefore deliver *us* the men, the children of Belial [worthless fellows], which *are* in Gibeah, that we may put them to death, and put away evil from Israel. But the children [sons] of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children [sons] of Israel.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 2. — Dr. Cassel renders this verse as follows: "And the heads of the whole people, out of all the tribes of Israel, formed themselves into a Congregation of the People of God, which [*sc.* people] furnished four hundred thousand men (namely) footmen, practiced with the sword." The E. V. is better; only, to make it unequivocally clear, it needs some such interpolation as we have suggested in the text. — Tr.]

[2 Ver. 9. — Dr. Cassel translates: "And now in the matter which we do against Gibeah, (proceed we) against it according to the lot." This does not differ essentially from the E. V., but is noted here as explaining what the author means by saying that the words "which we do against Gibeah" are parenthetical (see below). Bertheau and Keil explain:

"This is the thing we will do against Gibeah: against it with the lot!" "The words עֲלֶיהָ בְּלוֹרֶה," says Keil, "contain the resolution taken with reference to the sinful city, and are characterized by the enigmatical brevity of judicial sentences, and are to be explained by the proceedings prescribed by the Mosaic law against the Canaanites. The Canaanites were to be destroyed, and their land was then to be divided among the Israelites by lot. Accordingly, to proceed with the lot against Gibeah, is to proceed with it as with the cities of the Canaanites, to conquer and burn it, and to divide its territory by lot." One argument advanced in favor of this (the view of the Peshito: "we will cast the lot over it!") and against the current view (that of the LXX.), that the latter leaves the judgment itself unexpressed, and passes at once to a subordinate point which has reference only to the execution of the judgment, has no great force. For is not the judgment sufficiently expressed in עֲלֶיהָ, "against it!"? The other, however, that according to ver. 10, as ordinarily understood, the lot decides, not who shall go against Gibeah, but who shall act as purveyors for the army, it is difficult to meet, except by rendering ver. 10 as Dr. Cassel does. Compare the next note. — Tr.]

[3 Ver. 10. — Dr. Cassel's rendering is as follows: (ver. 9 b) "proceed we against it according to the lot; (ver. 10: and take ten men of a hundred out of all the tribes of Israel, and a hundred of a thousand, and a thousand of ten thousand, to take to themselves provisions for the host, and when they come to Gibeah of Benjamin to do according to all the abomination which it wrought in Israel (*i. e.*, to inflict just retribution)." The only difficulty in this rendering is the expression "to take provisions for the host" (*lit.* people), which strikes one as an unnatural way of saying, "to take provisions for themselves." But this difficulty is less serious than that which arises if we adopt the common rendering, and explain (as we must do in that case) ver. 9 as Bertheau and Keil do (*cf.* preceding note). For the fact that before proceeding to extremities, demand is made for the surrender of the guilty, is incompatible with a prior determination to "cast the lot" over Gibeah, to say nothing of the fact that such a confiscation of territory belonging to Benjamin, as this is supposed to imply, would have been in glaring conflict with one of the most important laws of the nation, that which rendered land an inalienable possession, first in the family, then in the tribe. On the other hand, it certainly seems as if 40,000 men must have been deemed sufficient to meet the 26,700 of Benjamin (ver. 15); and the statement of ver. 17, where the 400,000 of Israel are set over against the 26,700 of Benjamin, may be explained by supposing that the narrator, being about to relate the terrible losses on the national side in the first two engagements, wishes to remind the reader of the reserved strength from which the beaten army could draw reinforcements. — Tr.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Vers. 1, 2. And the chiefs of all the people formed themselves into a congregation of the People of God. The consciousness of an organic community is as yet fully alive in Israel. All the tribes were horrified at the crime in Benjamin. The necessity of conferring together is felt everywhere, from the north to the south. The natural representatives of the people (*cf.* on ch. i. 1) hasten to Mizpah, "to Jehovah," that is to say, at the invitation of the high-priest in the name of Jehovah, against whose holy law the crime was directed. For it may be assumed that whenever a popular movement, which has Jehovah for its centre, is spoken of, while no human personage as that of a Judge, is named, the priesthood was still the leading spiritual power. An עֲדָה, congregation, assem-

bled itself, וַתִּקְהַל; or rather, was convoked, for וַתִּקְהַל is the Greek *καλέω*, old Latin *calare* (*i. e.* *curia calabra*). It was formed of the heads<sup>1</sup> of the people who constituted themselves a "Congregation of the People of God."<sup>2</sup> (וְהַיְיָבִיבָה), from יָבַב = יָבַב, *constituere*). It is not by way of tautology that the narrator says: "the whole people, all the tribes;" for the fact is to be made prominent that, except Benjamin, not one tribe was wanting. The addition: "four hundred thousand men," explains why only the "heads" constitute the "congregation," namely, because the "People of God," as a whole, was too numerous. The number is mentioned with reference to ver. 10. Israel is still the warlike people which took possession of Canaan. The number of its sword-prac-

<sup>1</sup> וְהַיְיָבִיבָה, the pinnacles, or highest point of a building, and thence transferred to the heads of the people, *summi*. The word is philologically identical with the Latin *pinna* as against *propugnaculi*.

<sup>2</sup> The regular designation, for which modern nations have substituted the less spiritual and noble terms "parliament," "meeting," "chamber," "house." [How could they otherwise, seeing they are not theocracies? — Tr.]

ticed warriors is the measure of its greatness. Those who assemble themselves here about "Jehovah," are the heads of a community of warriors (*ecclesia militans*.)

Vers. 3. And the sons of Benjamin heard that an assembly of the tribes took place in Mizpah. This Mizpah is probably the same as that which in Samuel's time also was the national gathering place (1 Sam. vii. 5), and which is regarded as represented by the Neby Samwil of the present day,<sup>1</sup> in the western part of the Benjamite territory. The Levite, the narrator informed us, divided his unhappy concubine into twelve parts, and sent them throughout all Israel. We must agree, therefore, with the Jewish expositors, who maintain that he sent a part to Benjamin also. It must likewise be assumed that Benjamin was invited to the council at Mizpah, both on account of the sense of national community which characterized the period, and because the assembly was summoned at a place within the borders of Benjamin. The tribe already manifested its partisan feeling in favor of Gibeah, when it "heard," indeed, of what was going on, but neither sent representatives to the assembly, nor gave any token whatever of indignation at the deed, or of desire to exculpate itself.

Vers. 4-7. And the man, the Levite, made answer. When the assembly proceeded to investigate the facts, the accuser only appeared; the accused were wanting. The speech of the Levite is remarkable in more respects than one. Of the aged Ephraimite who took him into his house, he makes no mention; for in order to a right judgment of the matter it is not necessary to consider whose guest he was, but that his right to hospitality has been violated. Hence he says, "they rose against me" (עָלַי); and, "they surrounded the house, עָלַי, on my account." The men in Gibeah had no designs against his host; he alone was the object of their attack. Nor does he speak of individuals in Gibeah, but of the "lords of Gibeah," as if the whole city were guilty; which inasmuch as it had not prevented the excess, was indeed true. His accusation, "they thought to murder me," is not literally in accordance with their intentions, because he is ashamed to speak of the matter by its right name. Moreover, the crime intended was worse than death, and submission to it punishable with disgrace and death. But he does not say that he himself delivered his concubine up into their hands, that they

might treat her according to their lusts, instead of himself. And finally, he does not represent the violent deed as directed against an individual, but tells the assembled tribes that he cut the woman in pieces, and sent her throughout the whole country, because, as we already remarked above, it was a crime against all Israel. "Behold, all of you are sons of Israel." Without delay, he desires, that here and now, they consult, and that they separate not before they have formed a resolve. He fears lest otherwise the impression of the moment might wear off, and the crime be left unpunished.

Vers. 8 ff. And all the people arose. The people comprehend this, and unanimously proceed to action. Not one tribe shall be entrusted with the execution of the common resolve, but all shall take part in it, in order that the labor and odium may not fall on any one exclusively. The words

וְאִשְׁרֵי נַעֲמָוֶה לְבִכְרָה, ver. 9, are to be regarded as parenthetical. The sense is that the executive army is to be selected out of the tribes, not by votes, but according to the lot. It is thought that the tenth part of Israel, or forty thousand men, will suffice; for these, who belong to all Israel, since they were raised out of the whole, provisions and equipments are to be supplied. This is looked to, in order that Israel may need no sustenance from Benjamin, while desolating its territory in war. The words לְמַחֲת יָרֵדָה לָעַם remind us of ch.

vii. 8, where we have וַיִּקְרְחוּ אֶת-יִצְחָק הָעָם, and make it probable that there also לָעַם should be read.

The expression, ver. 11, "and all the men of Israel were gathered together as one man תְּכַרְבִּים," is to be understood of the army, which, forty thousand men strong, was gathered from all Israel as if no tribe distinctions existed. It was precisely in this perfect national unity and unanimity, that Israel sought its right to take the step it had in view. From the consciousness of this national character of the army, proceeded the effort to induce Benjamin to surrender the guilty, before the final resort to extreme measures. In the statement that "they sent into all the tribes of Benjamin," the expression, "tribes of Benjamin," forming as it were an antithesis to the "tribes of Israel," is peculiar. Properly speaking, there could not be "tribes" within a "tribe"; but since Benjamin formed an opposition camp, his "families" might be so named.

<sup>1</sup> [So Dr. Robinson, E. R. i. 460. Dean Stanley (*Sin. and Pal.* p. 212), claims Nebi-Samuel for the "high place" of Gibeon, and transfers Mizpah to Scopus (p. 222). The difficulty arising from the fact that in either case the assembly was held within the territorial limits of Benjamin, who

nevertheless only "heard" of it, is met by Mr. Grove (*Smith's Bible Dict.*, s. v. "Mizpah") by the apparently no less difficult supposition that the Mizpah of the present passage is to be located beyond the Jordan. — Tr.]

*The war against Benjamin. The armies of Israel are twice smitten. The divine promise of victory.*

#### CHAPTER XX. 14-28.

14 But [And] the children [sons] of Benjamin gathered themselves together out of the cities unto Gibeah, to go out to battle against [with] the children [sons] of Israel. And the children [sons] of Benjamin were numbered at that time out of

the cities twenty and six thousand men that drew sword, beside the inhabitants  
 16 of Gibeah, which were numbered seven hundred chosen men. Among all this  
 people *there were* seven hundred chosen men left-handed; every one could sling  
 17 stones at an hair-breadth, and not miss.<sup>1</sup> And the men of Israel, beside Benjamin,  
 were numbered four hundred thousand men that drew sword: all these *were* men  
 18 of war. And the children [sons] of Israel arose, and went up to the house of God  
 [Beth-el], and asked counsel of God, and said, Which of us shall go up<sup>2</sup> first to  
 the battle against [with] the children [sons] of Benjamin? And the Lord [Jeho-  
 19 vah] said, Judah *shall go up* first. And the children [sons] of Israel rose up in  
 20 the morning, and encamped against Gibeah. And the men of Israel went out to  
 battle against [with] Benjamin; and the men of Israel put themselves in array to  
 21 fight against [with] them at Gibeah. And the children [sons] of Benjamin came  
 [went] forth out of Gibeah, and destroyed [felled] down to the ground of the Isra-  
 22 elites that day twenty and two thousand men. And [But] the people, the men of  
 Israel, encouraged themselves [took courage], and set their battle again in array  
 23 in the place where they put themselves in array the first day. (And the children  
 [sons] of Israel went up and wept before the Lord [Jehovah] until even, and  
 asked counsel of the Lord [Jehovah], saying, Shall I go up [advance] again to  
 battle against [with] the children [sons] of Benjamin my brother? And the Lord  
 24 [Jehovah] said, Go up against him.) And the children [sons] of Israel came near  
 25 against the children [sons] of Benjamin the second day. And Benjamin went  
 forth against them out of Gibeah the second day, and destroyed [felled] down to the  
 ground of the children [sons] of Israel again eighteen thousand men; all these  
 26 drew the sword. Then all the children [sons] of Israel, and all the people, went  
 up, and came unto the house of God [Beth-el], and wept, and sat there before the  
 Lord [Jehovah], and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt-offerings and  
 27 peace-offerings before the Lord [Jehovah]. And the children [sons] of Israel  
 inquired of the Lord [Jehovah], (for the ark of the covenant of God *was* there in  
 28 those days, And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in  
 those days,) saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle against [with] the children  
 [sons] of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? And the Lord [Jehovah] said,  
 Go up; for to-morrow I will deliver them into thine hand.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 16. — מִיָּמִינֵם, from יָמֵינֵם, to miss, whence מִשְׁפָּטָם, a miss, failure, sin. The Greek ἀμαρτία is explained in a similar way (cf. Ernesti, *die Theorie vom Ursprung der Sünde*, p. 10, where the reference to our passage, however must not be suffered to mislead, as if the substantive מִשְׁפָּטָם were read).

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 18. — מִי יֵלֶכֶת עִמָּנוּ: "Who shall go up for us." Compare "Textual and Grammatical," note 2, on ch. i. 1. — Ta.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

The tribe of Benjamin refuses to confess its guilt, and to surrender the guilty. Defiant and warlike of spirit, it prefers to run the risks of war. It builds its hopes on the unwieldiness of the national organization, on differences of opinion, on partisan sympathies in its favor, and on the lack of inclination to war, especially to a war waged against a brother-tribe. It hopes, therefore, notwithstanding the great preponderance of force on the other side, to maintain its ground. And it is certain that by reason of the divisions of great confederacies (like the German), many a small government has often maintained itself in defiance and resistance. Thus also in antiquity, the Phocian town of Crissa, having injured Delphi and therewith wronged the national sanctuary of the Greeks, and being charged with other moral delinquencies,<sup>1</sup> thought nevertheless to be able to de-

<sup>1</sup> Compare Dunker, *Gesch. des Alterthums*, iv. 38, who nowever leans towards the side of Crissa as against the priesthood of Delphi.

fend itself against the executionary army of the Amphictyonic Council. And it succeeded in a degree. The war, waged against the unaided city by the Thessalians, Athenians, and Sicyonians, assisted by the wisdom of Solon, lasted ten years. It was ended at last by an oracular response and a stratagem of war, as in the case of the war with Benjamin (Paus. x. 37). John Frederick the Intermediate, of Gotha, likewise, expected to be able to maintain himself on his Gibeah, the Grunmenstein, in order to protect Grumbach, despite all his sins, against the ban of the German Empire; but, like Benjamin, he had to succumb before his brethren (of Saxony. Cf. Beck, *Gesch. Joh. Fried. des Mittleren*, i. 518). A similar war was that waged by the States of North America, in which the South defended itself like Benjamin, and with even greater success, albeit that the motives of the conflict were less manifest than they were at Gibeah.

Benjamin, however, would certainly have given up all thought of resistance, if the singular exposition were correct, which makes all the 400 000

men of Israel to proceed against Gibeah of Benjamin. This tribe numbered 26,700 men fit for military service. That the whole of this force is at once brought into the field is a matter easily explained, seeing they are about to enter on a desperate war. But that all the 400,000 men of all Israel appeared within the limited district of Gibeah, is both in itself and strategically improbable. The renewed mention of this number in ver. 17, is only designed to point out the enormous superiority of Israel in the means of war; just as to indicate the superior strength of Prussia over Denmark, it has doubtless happened that persons have spoken of the 500,000 men at the command of the Prussian state. But it surely could not occur that those 500,000 should all be sent against Schleswig. Nor is there anything in our narrative to require a different conclusion with reference to the 400,000 of Israel. On the contrary, we have, as above explained, the definite statement that 40,000 men were chosen for the war against Benjamin, which still left the advantage of numbers with the national army. The expositors, in considering ver. 9, have overlooked the fact that the purpose for which the lot was used is fully described in ver. 10; that the mere business of procuring provisions was not of such a nature as to demand such exactness of statement; that further, **לְעֶשְׂרֹת** stands perfectly parallel with **לְחֶמֶת**

and **לְבוּיָם לְנֶבֶעַ**, and that therefore the tenth part was levied for the purpose of executing judgment on Benjamin. It is also well known that the expression "sons of Israel," in ver. 19, stands not only for all the tribes, but is used in all the war narratives we have hitherto considered, of single tribes as well. Should it be objected, that especially according to Biblical narratives, the defeat of great armies by small ones is not an unheard of thing, it must be admitted that this is indeed true. But whenever this occurred in Biblical narratives, the victors had the cause of God and of truth on their side. And whenever that was the case—and it may perhaps be assumed to have been the case in the battle of Marathon also—the victory was of so decisive a character as to admit of no comparison with the ultimately useless successes of Benjamin. Gibeah means "height;" and victory remained with the Benjamites, as long as they kept their position on the elevated points. But what specially proves that the narrator views the army of Israel as composed of 40,000 men, is the circumstance that in the first engagement 22,000, and in the second, 18,000, together exactly 40,000, were put *hors de combat*. He mentions this to show that the assurance which Israel felt that a tenth part of its forces were enough to settle with Benjamin, was not justified in the event. Properly speaking, they are only ten tribes who confront Benjamin; and 40,000 are the tenth part of their available military strength: it costs, therefore, the military capacity of what, in a certain sense, is a tribe, before a tribe like Benjamin succumbs. The losses indicate, as we shall point out farther on, that Israel's cause in this war was by no means a perfectly pure one.

Vers. 14-17. And the sons of Benjamin gathered themselves together out of their districts unto Gibeah. Expositors have taken offense here at the word **הַעֲרִים**, as if the Benjamites had only lived in cities; but the narrator designs to state that the fighting men of Benjamin assembled themselves from all the regions assigned to

the tribe at Gibeah, as a fixed point of rendezvous, and at the same time for the purpose of protecting this city, as the special object of attack, against the other tribes. The number, also, here given of the tribe, 26,700, appeared to many not to harmonize with the subsequent enumeration of 25,700 men (vers. 35, 47). But it would have been surprising, indeed, if after two engagements, in which the enemy lost 40,000 men, none of Benjamin's men had been found wanting. Accordingly, the corrections suggested even as anciently as the Septuagint and Josephus, are less credible than this natural difference between the beginning and the end of the war. Of the 26,700, only 700 belonged to Gibeah,—a statement which is made for the purpose of testifying to the strong sense of community, through which the whole tribe takes up the cause of these few. The connection of ver. 16 with the preceding is perfectly clear. It states expressly that in the entire host (**כָּל הָעָם**), there were 700 left-handed persons (cf. on these at ch. iii. 15), who were skillful slingers. This number has nothing to do with the 700 of ver. 15. Since the Benjamites defended themselves from the heights, the far-throwing slingers were of special value. They were slingers, perhaps, because they were left handed. According to the *Cyropædia*, Cyrus caused all who were incapable of bearing other arms to exercise themselves in slinging. The Persians were fond of using slingers (Brisson, p. 658). The friend of the younger Cyrus, Mithridates, had four hundred slingers, "exceedingly light and active" (*Anab.* iii. 3, 6). The Rhodian slingers threw leaden plummets to a great distance. The Achæans struck any part of the body at which they aimed.<sup>1</sup> That skill in slinging was not confined to Benjamin, is evident from David's victory over Goliath. What a terrible weapon the sling could be, is demonstrated by the narrative of Livy concerning the Balearians, who hurled such a quantity of stones, like thickest hail showers, on the approaching Carthaginian fleet, as to prevent them from casting anchor (xxviii. 37).

Ver. 18. And the sons of Israel arose, and went up to Bethel, and inquired of God (**יִצְחָק**). It is *Jehovah* who answers, but their inquiry was addressed to *Elohim*. It is no wonder that they suffered a defeat. For they approach God without sorrow because they are obliged to fight against a brother tribe, without repentance for their own sins, and without sacrifices. It is thus that heathen inquire of their *Elohim*, just as oracles were consulted from a desire to know the future. Nor do they ask whether they should advance, whether they shall conquer—that they regard as certain—but who shall first attack. The answer was: "Judah shall go up first." It conforms in scope to their inquiry. They have not inquired concerning victory; hence, the answer contains nothing to inform them on this head. Had any other tribe but Judah been named, that might have been interpreted into an assurance of victory; for Judah always marched at the head (cf. on ch. i. 2). Judah's leading on the present occasion is, therefore, only in accordance with the common rule. The divine response abstains from giving any information beyond what the inquiry called for. This circumstance might have been a warning to them, had they been less

<sup>1</sup> Livy (xxxviii. 29) describes their slingers quite fully *Non capita solum hostium vulnerabant, sed quem locum des tinassent eris.*

certain. But does not the inquiry and its answer countenance the opinion that all the troops of all the tribes (400,000 men) were encamped before Gibeah? But in that case, we would have to suppose, in accordance with the analogy of ch. i. 2, that Judah began the conflict alone, which is against the whole narrative. On the contrary, the question rather serves to show that the 40,000 represented all Israel on a decimated scale; that they were not chosen according to tribes, but by the lot, out of the whole people. Consequently, the internal relations of this army differed from what they would have been, had the selection been according to tribes. Hence arose the question: Who shall take the lead in this army? God replies: "Judah, — as always"; and leaves every other question undetermined.

Vers. 19 ff. And the men of Israel arrayed themselves for battle with them at Gibeah (גִּבְעָה), they formed a *מִצְרָקָה*, an *acies*, cf. on ch. vi. 26), but the untrustworthy character of their generalship demonstrates itself thereby. Without a definite plan of attack and of the war, they dispose themselves before the city, and hope thereby to terrify the threatened tribe. But the latter falls upon them, and institutes a great destruction among them. The text says: *וַיִּשְׁחָדוּם בְּיָמָם*. The

word *שָׁחַד* is not only to kill, but also to wound, and to disable for war.

It is to be assumed, as a matter of course, although it is not stated, that after this first engagement, and again after the second, some time elapsed before a renewal of hostilities took place. It was unnecessary to state a fact that lay in the nature of the case. The troops were reinforced after the first defeat, although no thought was as yet entertained of adopting a different battle-plan, by which the enemy might be drawn away from his favorable position on the height. They determined, however, not to await an attack this time, as formerly, but to make one (*וַיִּצְרְחוּ*, vers. 24);

for this is the meaning of *צָרַח* (to advance at a rapid march), when used of movements in war. But, more important still, they begin to lose their self-righteous assurance. They go to Bethel, and weep there. They see how lamentable it is, to fight against their brethren, and lose thousands of lives in such a war. They begin to doubt whether their cause be a good one; and hence they inquire not now of an Elohim, after the manner of the heathen, but of their Elohim, Jehovah. The answer says: "Go up," but gives no promise of victory. In this way, the battle is renewed, — not on the next day after the former, but for the second time. They still fail to conquer Gibeah: the attack is repulsed, and the loss, though not as great as before, is yet terribly large.

The divine reply, "Go up," was not a deception of the people, but was grounded in the sad necessity of chastizing both parts of the warring nation.

1 [How came the ark to be at Bethel, if the one national sanctuary was at Shiloh? Hengstenberg (Keil also) replies that it was brought from Shiloh to Bethel during the war.

Had the answer been, "Go not up," Israel would have abandoned the war, and Benjamin would have been hardened in the pride of successful resistance. Israel, on the other hand, by going up and experiencing defeat, would again be brought nearer to the right spirit, which alone insures victory in Israel. Accordingly, in ver. 26 this spirit manifests itself. Proceeding to Bethel, they no longer merely weep there, and lament over the calamity of waging war on their brethren at such fearful sacrifices, but they abide in prayer and fasting. It is a sign of the penitence which they feel on account of their own sins. Hitherto, they had fought against Benjamin under a feeling of their own superior virtue, as if among their opponents there had been only sinners, among themselves none but Israelites without guile. There was an exhibition of Pharisaism, which modern history also carries on all its pages, in which there is much to be read of "moral indignation," but very little of "righteous self-knowledge" and repentance. Through the command of Lev. xxiii. 26-32, concerning the day of atonement, on which all nourishment was to be withheld from the body, fasting became in Israel the sign of confession of sin and repentance. The word *צוּם* occurs here for the first time: in the Books of Samuel it is the ordinary term. The great victory of Samuel over the Philistines is also preceded by a fast (1 Sam. vii. 6). The signification of the word resembles that of

*וַיִּצְרְחוּ*, a fast, from *צָרַח* (Lev. xxiii. 27: *וַיִּצְרְחוּ*) *oppressit, domuit*, and is etymologically connected with the Sanskrit *dam, damān, domare*, to tame. The Sanskrit *prāja*, to fast, is in like manner explained as meaning "to restrain one's self" (cf. Benfey, *Gr. Gram.* ii. 202). — Israel now performs what it had formerly neglected: it brings burnt-offerings and peace-offerings — the burnt-offerings as penitential offerings for the past, as in ch. vi. 26 ff; the peace-offerings as votive offerings with reference to the future (Lev. vii. 16). The Jewish expositors have a beautiful explanation. They derive *שָׁלָם* from *שָׁלוֹם*, peace. The last word of the law concerning sacrifices in Lev. vii. is *שָׁלָם* (ver. 37); and peace, say they, is the close of every holy life (cf. my *Irene*, p. 37.)

In vers. 27 and 28, the words: "for the ark . . . those days," form a parenthetical intercalation, which, as we shall point out below, is of importance in determining the time to which the events belong. After repentance and sacrifices, Israel inquires now for the third time of the Urim and Thummim; and now only, when they who inquire are in the right frame of mind, and receive a full and favorable reply, is the statement inserted that the ark of the covenant was at Bethel,<sup>1</sup> and that Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, was the high-priest. And now the answer is not simply "Go up," but conveys the assurance, "to-morrow will I give victory into thine hand."

For his arguments, see *Pentateuch*, II. 87-89, Ryland's edition. For our author's explanation, see the "Concluding Note," on p. 259. — Ta.]

*The men of Israel recommence hostilities. By feigned flight they draw the Benjamites away from Gibeah, which thereupon falls into their hands and is destroyed, together with nearly the whole tribe.*

CHAPTER XX. 29-48.

29 30 And Israel set liers in wait round about Gibeah. And the children [sons] of Israel went up against the children [sons] of Benjamin on the third day, and put themselves in array against Gibeah, as at other times. And the children [sons] of Benjamin went out against the people, *and* were [thus] drawn away from the city; and they began to smite of the people, *and* kill,<sup>1</sup> as at other times, in the highways, of which one goeth up to the house of God [Beth-el], and the other to Gibeah in the field, about thirty men of Israel. And the children [sons] of Benjamin said, They *are* smitten down [omit: down] before us, as at the first. But the children [sons] of Israel said, Let us flee, and draw them from the city unto the highways.

33 And all the men of Israel rose up out of their place, and put themselves in array at Baal-tamar: and the liers in wait of Israel came forth [also] out of their places [place], *even* out of the meadows [naked fields]<sup>2</sup> of Gibeah. And there [they] came against<sup>3</sup> Gibeah ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and the battle [there] was sore: but they [*i. e.* the Benjamites] knew not that evil was near them. And the Lord [Jehovah] smote Benjamin before Israel: and the children [sons] of Israel destroyed of the Benjamites that day twenty and five thousand and an hundred men: all these drew the sword.

36 So [Now] the children [sons] of Benjamin saw that they [the sons of Israel] were smitten:<sup>4</sup> for the men of Israel gave place to the Benjamites, because they trusted unto the liers in wait which they had set beside [against] Gibeah. And the liers in wait hastened, and rushed upon Gibeah; and the liers in wait drew *themselves* along,<sup>5</sup> and smote all the city with the edge of the sword. Now there was [omit: there was] an [the] appointed sign between the men of Israel and the liers in wait [was], that they should make a great flame [cloud—*lit.* elevation, rising] with [of] smoke rise up<sup>6</sup> out of the city. But when [omit: when] the men of Israel retired in the battle, [and] Benjamin began to smite *and* kill of the men of Israel about thirty persons: for they said, Surely they are smitten down [omit: down] before us, as *in* the first battle. And when the flame [cloud—*cf. ver. 38*] began to arise up out of the city with [omit: with] a pillar of smoke, the Benjamites looked behind them, and behold, the flame [whole] of the city ascended up [in flames, or smoke] to heaven. And when [omit: when] the men of Israel turned again, [and] the men of Benjamin were amazed [confounded]: for they saw that evil was come upon them. Therefore they turned *their backs* before the men of Israel unto the way of the wilderness; but the battle overtook [or, pursued after] them; and *them* which *came* out of the cities they destroyed in the midst of them.<sup>7</sup> Thus [omit: Thus] they [They] inclosed the Benjamites round about, *and* chased them, *and* trode them down with ease [at their place of rest.] over against [as far as before] Gibeah toward the sun-rising [on the east].<sup>8</sup> And there fell of Benjamin eighteen thousand men; all these *were* men of valour. And they turned and fled toward the wilderness unto the rock of Rimmon: and they gleaned of them in the highways five thousand men; and pursued hard after them unto Gidom, and slew two thousand men [more] of them. So that all which fell that day of Benjamin were twenty and five thousand men that drew the sword: all these *were* men of valour. But six hundred men turned and fled to the wilderness unto the rock Rimmon, and abode in the rock Rimmon four months. And the men of Israel turned again upon [returned unto] the children [sons] of Benjamin, and smote them with the edge of the sword, as well the men of *every* city,<sup>9</sup> as the beast [cattle], and all that came to hand [was found]: also they set on fire all the cities that they came to [that were found].

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 31. — וַיַּחֲלוּ לְהַכּוֹת מִהָעַם חֲלָלִים: "and they began to smite of the people, slain;" i. e., they smote so that the smitten became slain. חֲלָלִים is the accusative of closer definition. Dr. Cassel takes it as nom. native: "They began to smite, (so that,) as at the former times, slain of the people were [i. e., lay] on the highways, of which one," etc. Similarly in ver. 39. — Tr.]

[2 Ver. 33. — מַעֲרָה. Dr. Cassel: *Blöße*, "nakedness"; cf. his remarks below. The Pesbito read מַעֲרָה, a cave; the LXX. in Cod. Alex., and the Vulgate, מִמְּעַרְב, "from the west." Fürst (in his Lexicon) defines מַעֲרָה as "forest," and derives it from a conjectural root עָרָה III., to sprout thickly, to which he also assigns the participle in Ps. xxxvii. 35. Keil seeks to remove the difficulty of connecting the ambushade with an open, treeless plain, by remarking that "the words of the text do not require us to suppose that the forestless region was the place of hiding, but may be so understood as to affirm that the ambushade, having broken up from its hiding-place, advanced against the city from the forestless region." But he has failed to notice that the participle מַכִּיחַ speaks precisely of the "breaking forth," and leaves the idea of "advancing on the city" entirely unexpressed. — Tr.]

[3 Ver. 34. — וַיִּבְּאוּ מִבְּנֵי לִבְעָה: "from before Gibeah." Dr. Cassel, like the E. V., has "against." Bertheau says: "The ambushade, consisting of ten thousand chosen men, came 'from straight before' Gibeah; whither they came, is not stated, but from the connection it appears that they attacked the Benjamites, who were fighting at some distance from the city, in the rear." Keil adopts the same explanation. But it is manifest from vers. 37, 38, and especially vers. 40 and 41, that Bertheau and Keil are wrong, and the E. V. and our author right. — Tr.]

[4 Ver. 38. — וַיִּרְאוּ בְנֵי־בִנְיָמִן פִּי נֶפֶשׁ. With this verse, a new and more detailed account of the conflict begins. So Bertheau, Keil, and Buosen, as well as our author. To indicate this to the eye, we have introduced a new paragraph division into the text. Bertheau and Buosen agree with our author that the subject of נֶפֶשׁ is "the sons of Israel." According to Keil, "the sons of Benjamin saw that they were smitten, and that the men of Israel only gave way before them because they depended on the ambushade which they had laid against Gibeah. They became aware of this when the ambushade fell on their rear." But this is inconsistent with ver. 37, and certainly with ver. 40. Ver. 38 is a restatement of ver. 32, introductory to the detailed account that now follows. — Tr.]

[5 Ver. 37. — וַיִּמְשֵׁף. Dr. Cassel translates: "and the ambushade overpowered and smote the whole city;" and adds in a foot-note: "In the sense of Job xxiv. 22: 'מִשֵּׁף אֲבִירִים בָּכָחוּ' But there the word probably means 'to hold fast, to preserve,' cf. Delitzsch in locum. It seems better to take it here in the sense 'to march, advance,' cf. ch. iv. 6. — Tr.]

[6 Ver. 33. — הֲרֵב לְהַעֲלוֹתָם. The first of these words being taken as the apocopated hiphil imperative, a mixture of the direct with the indirect address arises from the suffix of the third person in the second word. Dr. Cassel avoids this by declaring הֲרֵב to be an apocopated infinitive (see below); but it is better to admit the existence of a grammatical inaccuracy. — Tr.]

[7 Ver. 42. — וַאֲשֶׁר מִהָעָרִים מִשְׁחִיתִים אוֹתוֹ בְּתוֹכּוֹ. Dr. Cassel translates: "and they of the cities (through which Benjamin came) destroyed them in the midst of them." Compare the exegetical remarks. Keil: "The words וַאֲשֶׁר מִהָעָרִים can only be an appositional explanation of the suffix in הֲרֵב, in the sense: Benjamin, namely, they who out of the cities of Benjamin had come to the aid of Gibeah (cf. vers. 14 f), i. e., all Benjamites. The following וַיִּשְׁחִיתֵם is a circumstantial clause illustrative of the preceding 'הַמִּלְחָמָה חָרֵב': 'in that they (the men of Israel) destroyed him (Benjamin) in the midst of it.' The singular suffix in בְּתוֹכּוֹ, refers not to Benjamin — for that yields no tolerable sense — but to the preceding דֶּגֶף הַמַּדְבָּר: 'in the midst of the way to the desert.'"

[8 Ver. 43. — This verse continues the description begun in ver. 42, by means of an animated *constructio asyndeta* מִן־בְּנֵי־בִנְיָמִן, they surrounded Benjamin (by throwing out bodies of men on his flanks); הֲרִידוּ־הוּ: 'hurled him down after him: מְנוּחָה הֲרִידוּ־הוּ, fell upon and trode him down at his resting-place (that is, when, exhausted, he halted to take breath — מְנוּחָה, accusative of place); and this pursuit and slaughter continued until the pursuers, who started from some distance north of Gibeah (ver. 31), had come south "as far as before Gibeah on its eastern side." There the remnant of the pursued found means to turn northward again, ver. 45; and were again pursued as far as Gidon (a place evidently somewhere between east of Gibeah and Rimmon). Compare our author's remarks below, which, however, indicate a slightly different conception on some points — Tr.]

[9 Ver. 48. — מַעִיר מָרָם. Dr. Cassel reads: "everything of the city, to the cattle and whatever else was found;" and adds the following note: "Many MSS., and the more recent expositors, point מָרָם, men, and yet it cannot be said that with בְּהִמָּה, this forms an altogether suitable antithesis, inasmuch as it still fails to express the idea that everything was put under the ban of destruction. The pointing מָרָם finds support in Josh. viii. 24; x. 20, where similar instructions אֶת־הָאָדָם are spoken of." — Tr.]



## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Vers. 29 ff. From the determined purpose of the ten tribes to prosecute the war, Benjamin should have taken occasion to yield. Since Israel continued firm, notwithstanding severe losses, it might have concluded that it was impossible to resist permanently. It might also have observed that another spirit animated this second war, and that Israel had become thoroughly in earnest to complete the work it had taken in hand. Another interval of time had manifestly passed by. After the dissolution of the first army, Israel had to levy a new one (illustrative examples of this may be found in the North American Union war). Accordingly, the first engagements are spoken of together, as the "former" or the "first" war (vers. 32 and 39). The tribes of Israel now first conclude to use strategic arts. This circumstance incidentally affords data which enable us to obtain a somewhat clearer idea of the theatre of the war. Gibeah lay high; the attack of the Israelites came from the direction of Bethel, *i. e.*, from the Northwest. Two highways are mentioned, along which the sons of Benjamin advanced to meet the assailants—one leading to Bethel, the other to "Gibeah-in-the-Field" (a Lower, or Field-Gibeah in contrast with the Higher, or Mountain-Gibeah). The Israelites allure the Benjamites, rendered unwary by former successes, farther and farther away from the heights and the city. It is expressly said that Benjamin went out "to meet them" (לִקְרָאתָם, ver. 31). They offer scarcely any resistance, but retreat, constantly followed by Benjamin, who already sees the triumphs of the first two battle days reenacted (ver. 32). Not until they have reached Baal Tamar,<sup>1</sup> doubtless at a suitable distance from Gibeah, do they halt, and wait for the prearranged signal from other divisions who lay in ambush, and who were to attack the city as soon as the Benjamites should leave it. The place from which the city is thus suddenly attacked, is called מַעְרֵה־גִּבְעָה (ver. 33).

The Masora has pointed מַעְרָה, evidently deriving the word from עָרָה, to be naked, and intending to express by it, as Raschi also explains, the "nakedness" of Gibeah, *i. e.*, its accessible part. The Targum renders it by מַיִשֶׁר; the same term by which it constantly renders עֶרְבָה,<sup>2</sup> so that possibly it may have read מַעְרָה. It might then be understood of the point where the hill slopes down to the plain, and thus becomes more accessible. The simplest way would be to point so as to read מַעְרָה, a cave, as the Septuagint also seems to do: Μααργέβα (instead of Μαπαργέβη). North of the present Jeba, with which our Gibeah is held to be identical, runs the Wady es-Suweinit. It comes from Beitin and el-Bireh, to the Northwest, and, after passing Jeba, runs between high precipices, in one of which is a large cavern called Jaihlah (Roh. i. 441).

Vers. 34, 35. And they came against Gibeah, ten thousand men. We now first learn the nu-

<sup>1</sup> Movers (*Phönizier*, i. 661) proposes to explain this name of a place by means of the Phœnician Tamyris, Zeus Demarus. Raschl, on the other hand, connected it with the district of Jericho.

<sup>2</sup> This is supported by the Syriac-Hexaplar version of Paul of Tella, which has מִן מַעְרָבָה, which gives us a rendering of ἀπὸ δυσμῶν (Rördam, p. 179).

merical strength of the ambushade, the placing of which was stated in ver. 29. It is scarcely necessary to point out that we have here another fact going to show the improbability of a besieging army of 400,000, who could have surrounded the whole of Gibeah on all sides. Verses 34 and 35, while telling about the ambushade, take occasion briefly to indicate the result of the whole war, according to what, as Keil justly observes, is a characteristic practice of Hebrew historiography. This is followed, vers. 36 ff., by the more detailed account derived from ancient notes. Nor is there any discrepancy between ver. 35, which states that there fell 25,100 men of Benjamin, and ver. 46, which gives the number at 25,000. The latter is only the sum total of the three round numbers of vers. 44 and 45, namely, 18,000 + 5,000 + 2,000; and the great fidelity of the report shows itself in the fact that since the hundred over 25,000 is not divided between the round sums, it is also not included in the sum total, although according to ver. 35 its inclusion was only a matter of course. The artifice employed by the Israelites against the Benjamites, was in a different way also used against Shechem by Abimelech. Similar stratagems, practiced by Scipio, Hannibal, and others, are collected by Frontinus (*Stratagematicon*, lib. iii. cap. 10). Scipio besieged a city in Sardinia, feigned to take to flight before the besieged, and when they thoughtlessly followed him, *per eos, quos in proximo occulaverat, oppidum invasit*.

Ver. 36. For the sons of Benjamin had thought that they were smitten. The "they" of this sentence refers to the Israelites, as appears from the succeeding words. The verse is a recapitulation of verse 32, and is therefore to be rendered by the pluperfect: "they had seen or thought." They actually had *seen*, that the sons of Israel allowed themselves to be smitten.

Ver. 38. And the appointed sign between the men of Israel and the liers in wait was, that they should cause a great cloud of smoke to rise up out of the city. The form הָרָב הָרָב (הָרָבָה) is explained by the phrase הִרְבֵּה הִרְבֵּה, Ps. li. 4, where the *keri* has הָרָב. For not the imperative only, but precisely the infinitive, which forms it (both הִרְבֵּה), is also apocopated into הָרָב, and takes in consequence the adverbial signification, "strongly," "very," "fully." The word is quite essential to the full understanding of the sentence. The men of the ambushade are to cause a *great* pillar of smoke, like that of a burning city, to ascend, such as could not fail to be visible at a distance, and could not be mistaken. Bertheau must have overlooked this, when he proposed to remove the word out of the text.<sup>3</sup>

Vers. 42 ff. And the inhabitants of the cities destroyed them in the midst of them. The men of Benjamin fled; and in flight passed through the cities that lay in their course. Thereupon the inhabitants of these cities also arise, and slay the fugitives in their midst. The same thing occurs in all wars, when disorganized, fugitive troops must pass through the enemy's land.<sup>4</sup> Other expla-

<sup>3</sup> On the very ancient false reading הָרָב, found in some Hebrew MSS. and in the LXX., cf. Keil. Paul of Tella has given a similar rendering in his Syriac version (Rördam, p. 180).

<sup>4</sup> [But on this occasion the fugitives do not pass through the enemy's land. From first to last, whether fighting or



nations, such as have been given from time immemorial, do not appear to harmonize with the connection and the language. The clause cannot refer to those who burned the city; for how could they be called "אֲשֶׁר מִהָעָרִים"? Equally incomprehensible is the reason for using this expression, and the בְּרוּכוֹ connected with it, if Bertheau's explanation, which Keil has mostly followed, he adopted; for the pursuit and inclosure are first delineated in ver. 43. The explanation of Le Clerc appears to me to come nearest the sense: *Cum confugerunt Benjaminitæ ad urbes aliorum Israelitarum, ab iis occidebantur*. Only, this must not be understood of a systematic application for refuge on the part of the Benjamites; but of the natural phenomenon that against a pursued and smitten foe everything rises up. The narrator evidently points in this way to the embittered feelings against Benjamin which everywhere prevailed. In proportion to Benjamin's former overbearing haughtiness, is his present experience of misery. Not only is the hostile army continually at his heels, but he meets with enemies everywhere. Only the wilderness, which he endeavors to reach by fleeing in an eastern and northeastern direction toward the Jordan, promises safety. But before he arrives there, divisions of his men are cut off and

surrounded (בְּתִרָה, ver. 43). The pursuit is unceasing (this is the sense of הִרְדִּיפוּהוּ בְּמִיתָהוּ, "they chase his rest," hence probably the hiphil), he scarcely thinks to be able to take breath for a moment, before they are behind him again: in this way he is driven until he finds himself within the limits of the wilderness east of Gibeah. Finally, still pursued as far as an unknown place called Gidom, a remnant of his shattered hosts finds an asylum in the rock Rimmon, northeast of Gibeah and below Ophra, for the modern Rummôn, lying high, on a rocky Tell, on the north side of the great Wady el-'Asas, is held to be the rock Rimmon of our narrative (Rob. iii. 290; ii. 440).

Six hundred men of the whole tribe saved themselves on that rock. All the rest fell slain by the hands of brethren. They owed their safety to the eagerness of their pursuers to turn back, and destroy everything belonging to Benjamin, cities, houses, and herds. The cities are put under the ban and burned, like Jericho and other cities of the enemy. The Israelites are even more severe in their treatment of Benjamin, than the Pythia was toward the hostile Crissa, which was to be "warred on by day and by night and be made desolate, and whose inhabitants were to become slaves." But grief and regret did not fail to come.

fleeing, Benjamin moves on his own soil within his own boundaries; and this fact makes our author's explanation

of the last clause of ver. 42 impossible. Cf. note 7 under "Textual and Grammatical."—Ta.]

*Israel bewails the desolation of Benjamin, and takes measures to preserve the tribe from extinction. Twelve thousand men are sent to punish Jabesh-Gilead for not joining in the war against Benjamin, and to take their daughters for wives for the remaining Benjamites.*

## CHAPTER XXI. 1-14.

- 1 Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpeh [Mizpah], saying, There shall not
- 2 any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife. And the people came to the house of God [Beth-el], and abode [sat] there till even before God, and lifted up
- 3 their voices, and wept sore; And said, O Lord [Jehovah,] God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to-day one tribe lacking in Israel?
- 4 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the people rose early, and built there an
- 5 altar, and offered burnt-offerings, and peace-offerings. And the children [sons] of Israel said, Who *is there* among all the tribes of Israel that came not up with [in] the congregation unto the Lord [Jehovah]? For they had made a great oath concerning him that came not up to the Lord [Jehovah] to Mizpeh, saying, He shall
- 6 surely be put to death. And the children [sons] of Israel repented them for Benjamin their brother, and said, There is one tribe cut off from Israel this day. How
- 7 shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing we have sworn by the Lord [Jehovah], that we will not give them of our daughters to wives? And they said, What one *is there* of the tribes of Israel that came not up to Mizpeh to the Lord [Jehovah]? and behold, there came none to the camp from Jabesh-gilead to the
- 9 assembly. For the people were numbered [mustered], and behold *there were* none
- 10 of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead there. And the congregation sent thither twelve thousand men of the valiantest, and commanded them, saying, Go and smite the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead with the edge of the sword, with the women and the
- 11 children. And this *is* the thing that ye shall do, Ye shall utterly destroy every
- 12 male, and every woman that hath lain by man. And they found among the inhab

- itants of Jabesh-gilead four hundred young [women,] virgins[,] that had known no man by lying with any male: and they brought them unto the camp to Shiloh, 13 which is in the land of Canaan. And the whole congregation sent some to speak to the children [sons] of Benjamin that were in the rock Rimmon, and to call 14 peaceably unto them [and offered (lit. called) peace to them]. And Benjamin came again [returned] at that time; and they gave them wives [the women] which they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh-gilead: and yet so they sufficed them not [but they found not for them so many].<sup>1</sup>

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

1 Ver. 14. — וְלֹא־מָצְאוּ לָהֶם בָּן. Here, as in Ex. x. 14, בָּן means *son*; and, in general, it answers to *tantus*, *large*, *big*, *large*, *big*, where to "so" we add the appropriate adjective.

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Vers. 1-4. Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpah. Our author now informs us, by way of supplementing the preceding narrative, of two oaths taken by the congregation at the beginning of the war. All Israel promised, man by man (hence the expression אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל), that they would not give their daughters as wives to any men of Benjamin. They abrogated the *connubium* (the right of intermarriage) with the tribe. They determined to treat Benjamin as a heathen people, or as heathen nations, in the absence of special treaties (*ἐνδιαμύλια*), were accustomed to look upon each other. There were instances of heathen tribes who did not at all intermix. Such cases were found among Germanic tribes also, until Christianity had fully conquered them. It was the church that brought East-Goths and West-Goths, Anglo-Saxons and Britons, Franks and Romans, to look upon each other as tribes of one Israel. Very great, therefore, must have been the indignation of the collective Israel, when they thus, as it were, cast Benjamin out of their marriage covenant. The Romans once (335 n. c.) punished certain rebellious Latin tribes by depriving them of the privileges of *connubia*, *commercium*, *et concilia* (Liv. viii. 14). The Latins were subject tribes: Benjamin, a brother-tribe with equal rights. It might be thought that such a resolve was of itself sufficient to punish Benjamin for its immorality. But is it not probable that in that case, the tribe, through its stubbornness, would have sunk altogether into heathenism? It must be admitted, however, that double punishment was too severe. For it was to punish the guilty, not to destroy a tribe, that Israel had taken the field. This they now perceive — but too late — after their passionate exasperation has subsided. They now sit before the altar of God in Bethel, weeping over the calamity that has taken place. The consequences of their unmeasured severity are now perceived. To what purpose this utter destruction by the sword of everything that pertained to the brother tribe? When Benjamin took to flight, would it not have sufficed then once more to demand of him the surrender of the guilty? Would he still have resisted, when, helpless, he sought the wilderness for refuge? To what purpose the slaughter of the flying? the indiscriminate use of sword and fagot in the cities? Israel has cause for weeping; for it feels the horrors of civil war. Humanity and kindness are frightened away when brethren war with brethren. The worst and most detestable crimes are committed against nations by themselves, under the influence of foolish self-deception,

when they fall victims to internal strife. The exasperation of the feelings puts moral causes entirely out of sight. Leaders, says Tacitus, are then less valued than soldiers (*Hist. ii. 29, 6: "civilibus bellis plus militibus, quam ducibus licere"*). Israel may bewail itself before God, but it cannot accuse its leaders. The Urim and Thummim approved the punishment of Benjamin, but not the oaths and cruelty with which it was accompanied. However, if Israel in this war furnishes an illustrative instance of the results to which defiant obstinacy (on the side of Benjamin), and fanatical, self-exasperating zeal (on the side of the ten tribes), may lead, it is also instructive to note that it knows that such doings must be repented of. It builds an altar, and, as before the war, brings burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, the first expressive of penitence for the past, the other of vows for the future.

Vers. 5 ff. For they had made a great oath concerning whoever came not up to Jehovah to Mizpah, saying, He shall surely be put to death. Israel here also again clearly shows in its history, what every man may observe in his own experience: that repentance and vows, with reference to past precipitate sin, have scarcely been expressed, before the same thing is done again, and frequently with the same blind zeal which was just before lamented. At that time, when indignation at the outrage in Gibeah filled all hearts, an oath was also taken that every city in Israel that did not send its messengers to the national assembly, consequently took no part in the general proceeding against Benjamin, which was the cause of God, should be devoted to destruction. Such a city was considered to make itself, to a certain extent, an ally of Benjamin, and to be not sufficiently disturbed by the outrageous misdeed, to give assurance that it did not half approve of it. Amid the terrible events of the war, it had been neglected to ascertain whether all cities had sent messengers; it is only now, when the question how to help Benjamin up again without violating the oath, is considered, that the absence of messengers from Jabesh-Gilead is brought to light. And what is it proposed to do? To deal with that city as they have just lamented to have dealt with Benjamin. In order to restore broken Benjamin, another and in any view far less guilty city is now to be crushed. The reconciliation of breaches made by wrath is to be made by means of wrath. The people lament that they have sworn an untimely oath, and instead of penitently seeking to be absolved from it before God, undertake to make it good by executing another, equally hard and severe, and that after "Jehovah" has smitten the rebellious (ch. xx. 35), and peace has been re-

stored. Jabesh-Gilead was a valiant city, full of men of courage, as all Gileadites were. According to Eusebius, it lay six miles from Pella. Robinson searched for its site along the Wady which still bears the name Yabis, and thought it probably that now occupied by some ruins, and called ed-Deir (*Bibl. Res.* iii. 319). The city must have been one of importance in Gilead. This is indicated by the fact that the Ammonite king Nahash selects it as his point of attack (1 Sam. xi.). In the history of Jephthah its name does not occur. When king Saul hears of the danger threatened the city by Nahash, he cuts a yoke of oxen into pieces, which he sends throughout all Israel with a summons to march to the relief of Jabesh-Gilead, and obtains a splendid victory. These historical notices suggest some noteworthy connections. Against Jabesh the Israelites now undertake the execution of a severe vow, in order to assist Benjamin. At a later date, Saul of Benjamin collects Israel around him, in order to deliver Jabesh. Jabesh does not come when summoned against Benjamin, by the pieces of the slain woman. Under Saul, Benjamin summons the whole people for Jabesh, by the pieces of a sacrificial animal.

Israel sends 12,000 valiant warriors against Jabesh-Gilead—a duly proportioned number, if 40,000 proceeded against Benjamin. The commander of these troops is instructed to destroy everything in Jabesh, except the virgin women, who are to be brought away, in order to be given to Benjamin. It may be assumed, however, that these instructions are to be so taken as that the army was to compel Jabesh to deliver up its virgin daughters as an expiation for its guilt, under threat of being proceeded with, in case of refusal, according to its proper deserts.<sup>1</sup> For it is not stated that the destruction was carried out; and, on the other hand, under Saul, Jabesh is again, to all appearances, the chief city of Gilead. The four

hundred virgins are then, so to speak, the expiatory sacrifice for the guilty in Gilead. As such, and because the Gileadites were forced to surrender them, they could be given to Benjamin, notwithstanding the oath, which contemplated a voluntary giving. The words in ver. 14. "which they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh-Gilead," do not imply that the others were actually killed, but indicate that these were those who in any event were to be permitted to live for the sake of Benjamin, and who by their life—not as frequently among the heathen, by their death—helped to preserve the existence both of the Gileadites, from whom they were taken, and of the Benjaminites, to whom they were given.<sup>2</sup> Inasmuch as they were preserved alive when it was possible to kill them, they were no longer considered to be such as ought not to be given to Benjamin. How instructive is all this! Israel will not break its oath, but evades it after all! If Gilead had deserved death, then its virgin women could not be allowed to live. If these may be saved alive, why should the children die? The Gileadites may not give their daughters voluntarily, but do not the Israelites give them for them? The surrender of these maidens is indeed a violent solution of the dilemma in which Israel finds itself, but the solution is only formal, not natural. The Greeks also, in cases of oaths thoughtlessly made, whose performance was maliciously insisted on, had recourse to formal exegesis, which avoided the real execution (cf. Herod. iv. 154; Nägelsbach, *Nachhom. Theol.*, p. 244). For the sake of kindness to Benjamin, Israel here thought itself justified in adopting a similar course; for in order not to weaken the sanctity of oaths, they evaded that which they had sworn by a formal compliance. They soon found occasion to repeat the process; for the four hundred Gileaditish maidens were not sufficient.

1 The Athenian Ionians, according to Herodotus (i. 146), stole Carian women for themselves, and killed their fathers. Hence, he says, the Milesian custom which did not permit women to eat with their husbands, or to call them by their names.

2 [Unfortunately, this exegesis has not a particle of support in the text. To use a favorite phrase of the Germans on such occasions, it is entirely *aus der Luft gegriffen*. — Tr.]

*A second expedient to supply the Benjaminites with wives: they are instructed to carry off the maidens in attendance at one of the feasts held periodically in Shiloh.*

## CHAPTER XXI. 15-25.

15 And the people repented them for Benjamin, because that the Lord [Jehovah]  
16 had made a breach in the tribes of Israel. Then [And] the elders of the congregation said, How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing the women are  
17 destroyed out of Benjamin? And they said, *There must be an inheritance for them*  
18 that be escaped of Benjamin,<sup>1</sup> that a tribe be not destroyed out of Israel. Howbeit, we may not give them wives of our daughters: for the children [sons] of  
19 Israel have sworn, saying, Cursed be he that giveth a wife to Benjamin. Then they said, Behold, *there is a feast of the Lord [Jehovah] in Shiloh yearly [.] in a place*  
[omit: in a place] which [namely, Shiloh] is on the north side of Beth-el, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Beth-el to Shechem, and on the south of  
20 Lebonah. Therefore, they commanded the children [sons] of Benjamin, saying, Go,

- 21 and lie in wait in the vineyards; And see, and behold, if [when] the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin.
- 22 And it shall be, when their fathers or their brethren come unto us to complain [contend], that we will say unto them, Be favourable unto them for our sakes [Give us them kindly]: because we reserved [took] not to [omit: to] each man his wife in the war;<sup>2</sup> for ye did not give unto them at this time,<sup>3</sup> that ye should be
- 23 guilty. And the children [sons] of Benjamin did so, and took *them* wives, according to their number, of them that danced, whom they caught: and they went and
- 24 returned unto their inheritance, and repaired the cities, and dwelt in them. And the children [sons] of Israel departed thence at that time, every man to his tribe and to his family, and they went out from thence every man to his inheritance.
- 25 In those days *there was* no king in Israel: every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 17. — יְרֵשֶׁת פְּלִיטָה לְבִימָן. Dr. Cassel renders: "A portion of escape yet remains for Benjamin," i. e., a means of delivering the tribe from extinction. This agrees well with the context, but is expressed somewhat singularly. Keil: "'Possession of the saved shall be for Benjamin,' i. e., the territory of the tribe of Benjamin shall continue to be a separate possession for those Benjamites who have escaped the general slaughter." But this is not only incongruous with the context, but puts a meaning into the words which, as they stand, they cannot have. It seems to me that the better interpretation is as follows: In ver. 15, the people lament that a tribe is broken off. Thereupon the elders meet for consultation. It is agreed that the only thing needed to avert the catastrophe, lamented by the people as if it had already taken place, is a supply of wives. "There is a possession of escaped to Benjamin," say the elders (ver. 17), "and a tribe will not be destroyed out of Israel" (as the people lament). "We, it is true, cannot give them our daughters (ver. 18), but behold there is a feast in Shiloh" (ver. 19). — Ta.]

[2 Ver. 22. — בְּמִלְחָמָה. Our author translates; *als Kriegsbeute*, i. e., as captives of war, cf. the exegetical remarks below. It seems better to refer the word to "the war" against Jabesh-Gilead. — Ta.]

[3 Ver. 22. — בְּעֵת הָאֵשׁמוּ. The word בְּעֵת, rendered "at this time" by the E. V., belongs to the last clause of the verse. The two clauses together are well rendered by Dr. Cassel: "for you have not given them to them, in which case (בְּעֵת) you would be guilty." He adds in a foot-note: "בְּעֵת as in ch. xlii. 23; 'in which case he would not have caused us to hear things like these.'" Bertheau refers also to Num. xxiii. 23. — Ta.]

## EXEGETICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

Ver. 15 ff. The fact that the number of maidens obtained at Jabesh-Gilead proved insufficient, furnishes the occasion of another consultation, instituted by the "elders of the congregation" (ver. 16), in order not to let the tribe of Benjamin die out. Finally, they hit on one last piece of deliverance (יְרֵשֶׁת פְּלִיטָה) that is yet left them: they conclude to point out to the Benjamites a method by which they may seize for themselves those wives, which Israel, by reason of its oath, cannot give them. The inhabitants of Jabesh, likewise, did not give their daughters; they were forcibly taken from them, and turned over as booty to the sons of Benjamin.

Shiloh was the scene of a periodically recurring feast, at which the maidens assembled from all regions, and executed dances in certain fixed places. For the sake of these places, and to enable the Benjamites to reach the proper locality without exciting particular attention, an exact description of the situation of Shiloh<sup>1</sup> is added.<sup>2</sup> For that it is not gone into for the sake of Shiloh itself, is evident from the fact that such descriptions are not elsewhere customary. The Benjamites are

told of the vine-hills that enclose the dancing-places. There they are to wait, concealed in the thickets, until the maidens come forth; when they are to rush upon them, seize each a wife, and return with them, along the well-known roads, southward over Rimmon, to their territory, now again peaceably held by them. The Benjamites appear to have directed attention to the consequences of such an exploit, and the ill-will of fathers and brothers likely to be engendered by it. But the elders of the congregation quiet their apprehensions, and say:—

Ver. 22 ff. When their fathers or their brethren come unto us to contend. Verse 22 also has experienced the most singular expositions. The Syriac and Arabic versions have substituted לְהִירָוּ, wherein Studer proposes to follow them. Others, as Bertheau, deem it necessary to leave out the words בְּמִלְחָמָה . . . . בִּי לֹא. Keil thinks that the words express the sense of the Benjamites, as if they had uttered them. And yet the matter is clear. The Benjamites, having recent experience of the consequences of lawlessness, are apprehensive of new troubles, in consequence of the proposed seizure. The elders quiet

1 The description may still be recognized, since Robinson seems to have discovered Shiloh in Selin, and Lebanon in Lubban. The description of Shiloh as "Shiloh which is in the land of Casaan" (ver. 12), is more peculiar. This was only the full name of the place, cf. Josh. xxi. 2, and xlii. 9, where it is named in the same way. Cf. *Lugdunum Batavorum*.

2 [Better Keil: "The exact description of the situation of Shiloh serves to show that it was peculiarly adapted for the execution of the advice given to the Benjamites, who after seizing the maidens, could easily escape into their territory by the highway leading from Bethel to Shechem, without being apprehended by the citizens of Shiloh" — Ta.]

their fears, and say: No doubt, the fathers or brothers will come and contend warmly; and with us, for it will be manifest that we have given the occasion. Without this, you, the tribe of Benjamin, would not now have dared to do this thing. They will reproach us with having brought them under the curse of having violated their oath, inasmuch as you have obtained their daughters. Then shall we say to them (the fathers): Be quiet and gentle; give the maidens kindly to us. You know that we did not take them in war, as booty, as for instance, at Jabesh. We have indeed allowed them to be taken (for which no grudge is to be held against Benjamin); but in peace, not for injury: and as you did not give them, no guilt attaches to you. What else could we do to provide wives for Benjamin, without involving ourselves in the curse of a broken oath? We therefore allowed your daughters to be seized, but not as captives of war. Your daughters have gone to them involuntarily; and no curse can come on you, since you did not give them to them. The emphasis of the sentence

lies on this very word לְקַחְתִּי. Since we permitted them to be taken, there can be no thought of disgrace and war, or of insult. Therefore, do not contend; for why should there be contention where there is no war. The "elders" will ask forgiveness for themselves, on the ground that they meant it well with the seizure (לֹא בְמַלְחָמָה), not in war; and fathers and brothers, whose wrath against Benjamin has now subsided, will all be satisfied, as soon as they are convinced that what has been done does not render them liable to the curse which lights on oath-breakers. For the oath that had been taken was latterly the chief hindrance in the way of reconciliation with Benjamin.

The Benjamites, thus encouraged, and made to feel secure against bad consequences, actually execute the proposed exploit, and with the wives thus won return happy to their renovated inheritance. Roman history, it is well known, has a celebrated occurrence of a similar nature in the rape of the Sabine women. A few analogous features are undoubtedly observable therein. The tribes of Italy refuse to enter into marriage treaties with the Romans; and the latter feared the destruction of their scarcely founded state. The Sabine rape occurred in the fourth month of Rome (Plutarch, *Romulus*, 14); and four months Benjamin had been sitting in the rock Rimmon. Benjamin received only maidens (vers. 12, 21); and only maidens likewise did the Romans seize (Plut. l. c.; Schwegler, *Röm. Gesch.* i. 478). It was also a feast for which the Sabine women appeared in Rome, albeit not as active participants. In Israel, it has been thoughtfully conjectured, the dancing maidens perhaps celebrated the memory of Miriam's festive chorus of timbrel-striking maidens, when Israel had safely passed through the Red Sea. The Romans celebrated the consualia on the anniversary of the rape of the Sabine maidens, and conceived the observance sacred to the sea-god. In like manner, the animal that symbolized Mars, the god whom Romulus chiefly served at Rome, was the wolf, whom also his worshippers did not disgrace. Benjamin is compared with a wolf, and the word חִפְזִי, used of the seizure of the virgins (ver. 21), is afterwards applied as characterizing the wolf<sup>1</sup>

Schwegler (*Röm. Gesch.* i. 469) declares that the rape of the Sabines is a myth, sprung from the conception of marriage as a robbery.<sup>2</sup> But it is precisely in this story that the seizure of women is contrasted, as a thing improper in itself, with the regular marriages of the other tribes. The idea of the narrative is rather to show the impossibility of maintaining laws prohibiting intermarriage between different tribes. It contained the lesson that the marriage connections of men overleap the historical divisions of tribes and families, and that just as the ship converts the separating sea into an highway of fellowship (*Neptunus Equestris*, for the sea is a steed), so *connubium*, the practice of intermarriage, is the commingling of different tribes. *Consualia* are, therefore, *conjugalia*; *Consus* is *Conjux*: the veiling and concealment connected with his festivals, corresponds to the concealment of the married (*nubere, connubium*), and the sacrifice of a mule corresponded to the wish, that although the union was one of heterogeneous elements, analogous to that from which the animal sprang, it might nevertheless not be marked by the barrenness of which he was a symbol.

But all this is yet more clearly taught by Benjamin's seizure of the maidens of Shiloh. Israel is the type of an organic nationality with different tribes. Should it attempt to abolish the practice of intermarriage, the result must be, either the forcible taking of women, or the death of a member of the living whole. In peace the Benjamites regain what they had lost in war. An ambuscade almost annihilated them: by an ambuscade they now win new life. Then Israel lay breathing forth wrath, in desolate wadys, in order to inflict barrenness: now, Benjamin lies among fertile vine-hills, in order to procure a blessing. It is frightful to think of Benjamin dissolving in flames, and his women and maidens falling by the inexorable sword; so that it must be acknowledged a grateful change when we can picture to ourselves the Benjamites hurrying away with their kidnapped prizes. But the seeming act of war was yet not without its terrors and tears, as suddenly the timbrels ceased to sound, and daughters screamed, and mothers wept. It was an image of war sufficient of itself to mark the horribleness of civil war. The narrative is given for the purpose of pointing out into what irregularities a people naturally falls when it lacks the organic unity of one general regimen. It closes with the words, which might form the superscription of the entire Book: "There was no king in Israel, and every man could do what seemed right in his own eyes."

CONCLUDING NOTE.—The time in which the occurrence at Gibeah and the events that grew out of it took place, it is not difficult to ascertain. Everything points back to the time in which the memories and traditions of Israel's military fellowship under Joshua were yet living and fresh. It is the period concerning which it is said, Josh. xxiv. 31, and Judg. ii. 7: "And the people served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of Jehovah, which he did for Israel."

It is also evident from the narrative that God was still zealously served. *Coui sel* was sought from

mother must be robbed of her child because she loves it. The narrative in question exhibits the necessity of robbery because the stranger does not meet with love.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the Targum on Ezek. xxii. 27, and my *Gold. Thron. Salomonis*, p. 164.

<sup>2</sup> The usages, also, of which he makes mention, as, for instance the Spartan, have a different meaning. The

the Urim and Thummim. The people wept and fasted before God. They brought burnt-sacrifices and peace-offerings. Of idolatry, there is not a trace. Union with heathen women is held inconceivable. All Israel still feels itself under a military organization such as obtained under Moses and Joshua. In all probability, no great length of time had elapsed since military operations for the conquest of the land had come to a stand-still. From Judg. i. 22-26, it may be seen what great importance was attached to the conquest of Bethel. When the house of Joseph, in whose territory Shiloh and the estate of the high-priest lay (Josh. xxiv. 33), went up against Bethel, "Jehovah was with them." It is probable that from that time until into the days of the events that have just been related, the ark of the covenant was at Bethel, and that that place was the centre of military actions. The ark must, however, have been removed before the end of the Benjamite war; for when peace is restored, it is found in Shiloh. Its stay at Bethel cannot have been long, for there is there no permanent altar (ch. xxi. 4). The maidens of Jabesh, also, are not brought to Bethel, but to Shiloh (ch. xxi. 12). The exodus from Egypt is still in living remembrance (ch. xix. 30). Just as after the death of Joshua, the order was, "Judah first" (ch. i. 1), so it is now (ch. xx. 18). Nothing is visible as yet of the partial efforts of single tribes. All this is most clearly deducible from the fact that Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, and the grandson of Aaron, stands at the head of the sanctuary (ch. xx. 28). He was yet one of those who had seen the great works of Jehovah. Eleazar, his father, had died after Joshua. Until he himself died, Israel's religious condition was doubtless such as is described in ch. ii. 7. Moreover, his name and character suggest the inference that the events just treated of, are immediately connected with the preceding great age. It was Phinehas whose moral zeal incited him to slay the sinning Israelite in the territory of Moab, for which act he was praised as having "turned away the wrath of God" (Num. xxv. 7-12). To him, therefore, the moral indignation of Israel over the criminal outrage of Benjamin, is doubtless to be especially attributed. He had been selected by Moses to accompany a hostile expedition against Midian by which Israel had been seduced into heathen practices (Num. xxxi. 6). This expedition numbered twelve thousand men, — one thousand from each tribe. The expedition against Jabesh-Gilead was organized in a similar manner. If this type of priestly zeal for faith and purity of morals stood at the head of Israel, the whole war against Benjamin, at least so far as its motives are concerned, becomes plain. Before this, a similar war against the two and a half transjordanic tribes had almost occurred. These tribes, as we are told in Josh. xxii., had built themselves an altar: the sons of Israel this side the Jordan thought that it was intended for idolatrous purposes. They came together in Shiloh, and resolved to proceed against the supposed apostates. But first an embassy was sent, at whose head Phinehas again stood (ver. 13). The address which he made to them is altogether in the spirit of the action determined on against Benjamin.

But it is precisely this last named occurrence that enables us to characterize yet more narrowly the catastrophe related in chaps. xx. and xxi., and to comprehend the design with which it stands, not at the beginning, but at the close of the Book, and alongside of the history of Micah. It is not

stated that a solemn embassy, like that in Josh. xxii. 19 ff., was sent to Benjamin, to set his sin before him in the spirit of kindness. Everything is indeed done according to the forms of the law and under priestly instruction, but with such assured consciousness of power, and with such carnal fanaticism, that the zeal is not pleasing, and is finally attended by lamentable consequences. The moral motive of the war against Benjamin is certainly to be praised; but the blind rage in victory is of the flesh. The crime of Benjamin was horrible; but the unity, determination, and perseverance which Israel manifests against this tribe, end in a fanaticism which at last forgot that the war was waged only because Benjamin was a brother, and that he was treated worse than national enemies had ever been. This is the lesson which the narrator designs to teach by placing this narrative at the close of his Book. He censures what his narrative contained, for both at its beginning and at its close he says: "there was no king in those days."

In the next place, he furnishes an opportunity to compare the tribes of Dan and Benjamin with each other, in their characters, their deeds, and their fortunes. Both were preëminently warlike. But this valor, to what did they turn it? Why was not Dan as bold against the Philistines as against peaceful Laish? or why did not Benjamin turn his martial spirit against Jebus, a place of such importance to him? Dan founds an idolatrous worship in order not to lose his tribe consciousness; and Benjamin defends a crime by way of resenting the interference of other tribes. Dan's offense, however, is justly deemed more heinous than that of Benjamin; for it committed a spiritual sin against the Spirit of the eternal God, while Benjamin protected a terrible, indeed, but yet only *fleshly* crime. The difference shows itself also in the consequences. It is true that both Benjamin and Dan lose their proper importance. The cities and territories of both are taken by Judah. But the hero who comes out of Dan, Samson, is none of theirs who practice idolatry in the north. His fame did not rebound to their honor. But out of Benjamin arose, after this, more than one glorious deliverer. When he was yet but a remnant, Ehud rose up in the midst of him to be a deliverer. Saul and Jonathan — the first king and his royal son — were Benjamites.

This being so, the narrator allows the reproach to fall on Israel of having acted so differently with respect to Dan and Benjamin. In the face of deeds like those of Micah and Dan, it remained inactive, neither warned nor took any other measure, although the sins were mortal in their nature; whereas it nearly destroyed Benjamin. And even before these occurrences in Benjamin, where was this united strength, when, in disregard of the law, heathen people, as the prophet tells them in ch. ii., were left to pursue their own modes of life and idol service?

It was this that drew the punishment after it. Had the external unity been in possession of its earlier internal strength, not only would the victory over Benjamin have been gained more quickly, but the servitude under foreign foes would not have come so soon. The observance of external forms, the customary prayer, the usual routine of worship in war and peace, are of no avail, unless animated by living faith.

Israel felt that one tribe was lacking to protect its eastern flank on the Jordan, when Moab invaded the country. True, it was a Benjamite.

**Ehud**, who delivered the country from the tyrant, but it was only by the help of Ephraim (ch. iii. 27) that he gained the complete victory. His own tribe were too few in numbers. Even Saul was still conscious that he came from the smallest tribe of Israel (1 Sam. ix. 21), although under him Israel already felt that "there was a king in the land."

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

The Book closes with two highly significant narratives. In connection with what has gone before, they demonstrate the insufficiency of the existing national organization. Even under the great heroes, national unity, in the full sense of the word, did no longer exist. Deborah complains of the indifference of the tribes to the common weal. Gideon experiences the envy of Ephraim, which under Jephthah breaks out into bloody hostility. Samson stood alone, whom his own people themselves propose to hand over to the enemy. The Judgeship affords no guaranty of national unity. With this, there is wanting also concentrated discipline against sin. Sin, therefore, can do what it will. There is a lack of authority. Hence, the Book of Judges forms the introduction to the Books of the Kings. Both concluding narratives show what the consequences are when the law loses its force, when faith grows weak, when apostasy breaks loose, and subjective arbitrariness asserts itself. The first sketches more particularly the decay of nationality, as exhibited in the arbitrariness of the individual; the second, the discords that result from the passionate procedures of the whole nation. The arbitrariness revealed by the first, concerns spiritual matters; that by the second, is fleshly in its nature. The first shows that against the service of God anything may be done with impunity: the second, that for fleshly sins blood is made to flow in streams. In both cases, indeed, sin punishes itself; but it broke forth, because every one did what he would. Moral decay always shows itself first in the priestly order. In both narratives, the frivolity of a Levite is a principal cause of the lamentable results that ensue. This opens the way to subjective arbitrariness of every kind, which superstition uses to its own advantage. Micah builds a private sanctuary, and under priestly forms sets up idolatry. He was punished for his sin, by being made to experience the thing he had done. He committed a robbery on the spirit of Israelitish law, and he was robbed, by Dan, of all he had applied to this purpose. As he had done, so it was done to him. The arbitrariness which he had exercised, was pleasing to others also. The priest who had sold himself to him, departed when he found a better buyer. The insubordination allowed the individual, because there was no one vested with general authority, permitted also a tribe to leave its appointed territory. One tribe (Dan), strong enough to rob the weaker, but with not enough spirit to win the land assigned it from the Philistines, removes into a distant region, and destroys a peaceable city. Robbery and murder are followed by permanent idolatry under the priestly charge of a descendant of Moses.

From all this we may see what the consequences

1 The following "Homiletical and Practical" paragraphs are based on the whole of "Part Third" of the Book, from chap. xvii. to xxi. inclusive. As will be seen, it was im-

would be were Christianity to become wholly inactive in the state. Persons, who deem themselves virtuous, suppose that the religion of a living God is by no means absolutely necessary for social life. But as soon as religion falls into decay, and before its influence ceases altogether, the moral supports of society fall to pieces. When the ministers of the Word begin to regard good positions more than truth, ruin is at hand. Venality is followed by its evil consequences, although he who is ready to sell himself know enough of the language of the day to conceal it. A Christian must serve no idols. The more surely, therefore, is it a sign of decay, when he makes a business of serving superstition.

**STARKE:** The creature is to be applied for God's honor, but not in honoring him. Arbitrariness in parts, leads to arbitrariness in the whole. If the foundation-stone, piety, be removed, then the tribes, like stones of a building, fall apart. The fear of God is the beginning of all wisdom, and also the protector of all peace.

**ON CHAPS. XIX.-XXI.** — When the command of God is no longer in the heart, priests become carnal, and their flocks lawless. As the Levite runs after a concubine, so the people of Gibeah seek the indulgence of bestial instincts. Who will imitate the morals of a master, who rejects God's sacred command. If in Gibeah the law of Jehovah is dishonored with impunity, how can it be expected that they will show obedience toward their brethren? Israel is indignant at the sins of Benjamin, but does it turn away from its own? Virtuous indignation is not difficult, but careful self-examination is more necessary. The rod may undertake to maintain supremacy, but only truth can succeed in doing it. Civil war arises not from political, but from moral dangers. The love of peace will begin as soon as self-righteousness ceases. Seb. Schmidt observes: "The best way of conciliating an enemy is to do him good." But kind deeds towards an enemy spring only from love, which is a daughter of repentance. The severest judges of morals often know least of this love. Love is most needed when it becomes necessary to punish. Israel began to grieve bitterly when Benjamin was almost destroyed. Men recognize only when too late, what the root was in the beginning. Lewdness strangles compassion. Carnal zeal consumes considerateness. Self-righteousness irritates the minds of men. Only at the altar of God, through the pious priest, does peace come into being.

**GERLACH:** In all this it becomes manifest what Israel might have been and continued to be, if it had clung faithfully to the Lord and his commandments, and had preserved its covenant with the Lord, and by that very means its national purity, unimpaired. — **THE SAME:** The people, drawing near to God in the presentation of expiatory burnt-offerings, sought in these offerings to remove the breach between the holiness of the Lord and their own sinfulness; and in the sacred meals that followed the offering, to obtain the assurance of the assistance of divine grace as they went forth into the holy war.

Only where the gospel is heard and followed, is there peace. For that reason, the Lord, our Saviour, says to all his disciples: Peace be with you!

practicable to place them under the several parts of the text to which they refer, according to the plan pursued in the other parts of the volume (cf. the note on p. 19). — **Tr.**







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